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# Centaurs, Sophists and Satire: Hybridity in the Works of Lucian of Samosata

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## Statements and Declaration

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## Abstract

The following dissertation assesses the works of Lucian of Samosata, a satirist writing during the Second Century AD. It is proposed that in his satires, Lucian uses the theme of hybridity in order to critique contemporary philosophical ideals and practices, framing the philosopher-sophists of the period as hybrids through their unsuccessful melding of the virtues of philosophy with the power of rhetoric. The theme of hybridity is explored in multiple ways, and this dissertation recognises Lucian's own hybridity, both in terms of his ethnicity and of his use of the serio-comic genre.

Lucian, in a number of his works, underscores what a true hybrid and a false hybrid is, and the motif of the centaur serves to illustrate his point well, being simultaneously an admired figure through the mythical tradition surrounding Cheiron, while also being a source of violence and uncivilised behaviour, as evident in tales of the Centauromachy. It is proposed that Lucian, rather than dismissing his hybridity, acknowledges (*Bis. Acc.* 33) and utilises it to create a more informed critique of the philosopher-sophists, establishing a series of works that serve to address both elite and non-elite concerns simultaneously. This is explored through an Aesopic framework, as it reveals how many of the tensions of high and low culture are present throughout the fable, and within tradition surrounding Aesop himself.

Using this framework, the theme of hybridity is explored through various examples of the human-animal hybrid; exploring physical hybridity through the centaur, while also discussing hybrid wisdom through modes of speech, and the capacity for hybridity to stretch across multiple spheres. In doing so, it is shown that Lucian frames the philosopher-sophists as hybrids who, through their concerted effort to appear as a source of wisdom, have in fact failed to reach such heights, merely becoming a source of corrupted, *false* wisdom.



## Introduction

*What is most monstrous of all, I have been turned into a surprising blend, for I am neither afoot nor a horseback, neither prose nor verse, but seem to my hearers a strange phenomenon made up of different elements, like a Centaur.*

*(Bis. Acc. 33)*

Dialogue's assertion that the 'Syrian' has transformed him into some form of monstrous hybrid summarises what is one of the core defining features of Lucian's satires. Having taken inspiration from his spiritual predecessor Menippus<sup>1</sup>, Lucian is frequently charged with the crime of merging the genres of Dialogue and Comedy, genres that are wholly incompatible (*Prom. Es.* 6). Their incompatibility, states Lucian in his *Prometheus es in Verbis*, derives largely from the nature of their respective occupations; where Dialogue is concerned with "philosophising about nature and virtue," Comedy is far more interested in laughing, joking, and generally deriding those who devote themselves to the high culture of philosophical discourse. In the context of music, he states, there are two octaves that separate them, from the highest pitch (ὀξύτατος) to the lowest (βαρύτατος).<sup>2</sup> Dialogue considers such an inconsistency to be as monstrous as the Centaur, representing an ineffectual and disjointed blend of two disparate elements. Such a claim is similarly made in *Prometheus es in Verbis* by Lucian himself; despite mixing two beautiful things (comedy and dialogue), he fears he has created something lacking in beauty (*Prom. Es.* 5). He portrays himself as creating a hybrid genre, one that sits between the high culture of dialogue and the low

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<sup>1</sup> Lucian's relationship to Menippus is discussed in full below.

<sup>2</sup> Such a retort is similarly utilised in the Syrian's defence of his hybrid literary form, wherein he asserts that Dialogue's complaints stem not from his embrace of Dialogue per se, but that he does not employ Dialogue as a means of discussing high philosophical topics, such as those found in Plato (*Bis. Acc.* 34).

culture of comedy, and admits that he has perhaps eschewed beauty of form over the temptation of literary novelty.<sup>3</sup>

It is precisely this occupation of a position between the high and the low that forms the focus for the following discussion, for the way in which Lucian utilises this balance as a means to critique and discredit contemporary philosophy. Lucian's "surprising blend" of genres results in an equally surprising blend of alternative dichotomies that address the effect of the hybrid as a creature representing two spheres of influence. It is the construction of a hybrid world throughout Lucian's works that is explored in the following discussion, for the way in which the animal hybrid becomes a literary tool allowing a forceful and informed critique of the philosopher-sophists while maintaining the popular appeal of comedic effect.

Scholars agree that Lucian's treatment of the contemporary philosopher-sophists is constructed as a social satire against their claims to wisdom.<sup>4</sup> Throughout his works, it is clear that Lucian utilises the tools of Second Sophistic education as a means to highlight the inconsistencies and incredulities that pervade this so-called form of higher learning. It cannot be ignored the paradox surrounding Lucian's critique, as he is, in essence, a philosopher-sophist himself given the nature of his dialogues as having a rhetorical flair. The following discussion nevertheless positions Lucian as distinct from those who he critiques, and proposes Lucian embraces the theme of the hybrid as an overarching tool with which to engage with his contemporary society. The hybrid creature comes to be a means not only to critique the nature of rhetoric and its practitioners, but through a recognition of the development and background of the hybrid in both Western and Eastern mythology and fiction, it is possible to identify Lucian's playful relationship with themes of transgression and corruption. The hybrid, fundamentally no more than a mix of disparate objects, is traditionally a representation of the monstrous. However in Lucian's works, the hybrid has a dual role; it may be presented as an admirable concept, a culmination of two disparate objects combining to create an improved whole, however this is often in a direct opposition to the more traditional monstrous hybrid. It is proposed that Lucian presents this successful hybrid

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<sup>3</sup> For a fuller discussion of Lucian's mixing of genres, see A. Billault and E. Marquis (eds.), *Mixis: Le mélange des genres chez Lucien de Samosate* (Paris: Demopolis, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> See C.P. Jones, 'Two Enemies of Lucian' *Greek and Roman Byzantine Studies* 13 (1972): 475-487; B. Baldwin, 'Lucian as Social Satirist' *The Classical Quarterly* 11:2 (1961): 199-208; R. B. Branham, 'Lucian's Prologues: Introducing a Sophist' *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974-2014) 115 (1985): 237-243.

through an engagement with the fable genre, suggesting that the corruption of the hybrid form derives from a corruption of social values. It is through Lucian's recognition of his own hybridity, and manipulation of the rules governing hybridity that the concept of the philosopher-sophist becomes subverted. Lucian himself is able to invert elite and non-elite power structures, taking the place of the Aesopic dung-beetle, and becomes a superior force over his contemporary purveyors of false wisdom.

## The Hybrid

It is first crucial to underpin what is meant by the hybrid. The term 'hybrid' encompasses a wide variety of different notions and disciplines, and contemporary scholarship on the hybrid and hybrid theory exemplifies the fluidity of the term. While, put simply, the hybrid can be defined as a "composite," there exists a greater heterogeneity implied in the term, because it encompasses both physical and metaphorical hybridity. As Kapchan and Strong state, "not only animals and plants may be seen as hybrid, but people, cultures, traditions, and languages as well."<sup>5</sup> What's more, hybridity does not simply exist in the combination of ethnicity, but it is "effected whenever two or more historically separate realms come together in any degree that challenges their socially constructed autonomy."<sup>6</sup>

The challenge to a "socially constructed autonomy" is a core feature of formulating a hybrid. Stross notes that the boundaries between the two "parents"<sup>7</sup> of the hybrid must be separate enough in order to qualify as a true hybrid.<sup>8</sup> He gives the example of two breeds of floppy-eared rabbits, arguing that despite the difference in breeds, the progeny of the two animals is insufficiently different to be considered a true hybrid. However they must also be significantly similar, noting the impracticality of a hybrid consisting of an elephant and a canary,<sup>9</sup> and moreover this infeasibility of what he deems "biological" hybridity, must be applied in a similar manner to notions of

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<sup>5</sup> D.A. Kapchan and P.T. Strong, 'Theorizing the Hybrid' *The Journal of American Folklore* 112:445 (1999): 240.

<sup>6</sup> D. A. Kapchan, *Gender on the Market: Moroccan Women and the Revoicing of Tradition* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996) 6.

<sup>7</sup> On the subject of hybrid parents, Stross does acknowledge that the cultural hybrid, in contrast to the biological hybrid, may consist of two parents, due to the means by which hybridity occurs as processes of "diffusion, invention, learning, cultural assimilation and construction" (B. Stross, 'The Hybrid Metaphor,' *The Journal of American Folklore* 112:445 (1999): 264).

<sup>8</sup> B. Stross 'The Hybrid Metaphor,' 258.

<sup>9</sup> B. Stross, 'The Hybrid Metaphor,' 259.

“cultural” hybridity, that is, the combination of disparate “discourse genres, languages and other cultural phenomena.”<sup>10</sup> The formulation of the hybrid, therefore, must follow something of a set of rules; the hybrid must successfully challenge the “socially constructed autonomy” through a combination of sufficiently “separate realms.”

In the context of the following discussion, it becomes clear that these separate *cultural* realms are many and varied, as Lucian engages with distinct geographic, ethnic and linguistic spheres. The primary challenge to the socially constructed autonomy is prevalent in the melding of the “historically separate” realms of dialogue and comedy, in which the rules of hybridising appropriately disproportionate parents are followed. However this hybrid of disparate spheres in Lucian is evident not only through hybridity of genre but also through the presence of hybridised animals. The inclusion, it is argued, of topics that seem to appeal to a relatively broad audience (such as fables, hybrid animals and comedy), do not simply facilitate his critique, but solidify his work as a hybrid attracting the audience of the elite and non-elite. As Canclini argues, in the context of Latin America, “the formation of specialized collections of high art and folklore was a device...for ordering symbolic goods in separate groups and hierarchizing them.”<sup>11</sup> It is the hybridisation of literary form that allows for these hierarchies to be dissolved, encouraging an audience of both the elite and the popular.<sup>12</sup>

The spheres of the elite and the popular converge to create the hybrid of Lucianic satire, as these spheres are separate enough to allow a reinvigorated pure form. Lucian’s hybrid of the elite and the popular and of comedy and dialogue creates what Stross considers to be “hybrid vigour,” the capacity, and perhaps expectation, for the hybrid to exceed and amplify the qualities of its two “parents”. It is the identification of hybrid vigour in the context of a cultural hybrid that allows for the subsequent identification of the successful hybrid. By adapting to one’s environment through the act of hybridity, “an efflorescence of creativity often results...engag[ing] the needs and exploit[ing] the potential” of the new environment.<sup>13</sup> From this creation of the successful hybrid, the hybrid is thus able to develop further, becoming a part of the

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<sup>10</sup> B. Stross, ‘The Hybrid Metaphor,’ 257.

<sup>11</sup> N. C. Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, translated by C. L. Chiappari and S.L. Lopez, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) 223.

<sup>12</sup> D.A. Kapchan and P.T. Strong, ‘Theorizing the Hybrid’ 246, drawing upon M. Lauer, ‘Néstor García Canclini’s *culturas híbridas: Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad* (Mexico 1990)’ *Travesía* 1:2 (1992): 123-133.

<sup>13</sup> B. Stross, ‘The Hybrid Metaphor,’ 264.

“hybridity cycle,”<sup>14</sup> wherein the hybrid becomes an object in its own right, given its capacity to adapt and change effectively to its environment, to the extent that it becomes named. Stross states that “naming the hybrid indicates societal recognition of the hybrid as a legitimate entity,” and removes it from the perhaps pejorative nature that its role as hybrid once held.<sup>15</sup> Such a development can be evidenced in the works of Lucian, as in the case of both Lucian’s hybrid genre and his illustrations of hybrid creatures, the hybrid proves itself to be a superior creation. Moreover, the literary hybrid, the *seriocomic*, not only engages with dual genres, audiences and spaces, but as is shown, becomes a superior genre and means to attain true wisdom.

The hybrid comes, in Lucian, to be a successful melding of dialogue and comedy. However the presence of other ‘successful’ hybrids littered throughout Lucian’s works, there exists an outlier that consistently fails to abide by the ‘rules’ of hybridity set out by Stross. The philosopher-sophists of Lucian’s satire are neither different enough to be considered sufficiently challenging to socially constructed ideals, nor are they similar enough, on account of their fraudulent claims to possessing wisdom. It is this tension between hybridity and similarity that pervades Lucian’s critique of contemporary philosophers, as he methodically demonstrates the difficulty even in determining the hybrid philosopher-sophist from the ‘pure’ philosopher. Where the hybrid animal traditionally verges on the side of a grotesque mixture, representing the more prevalent “mongrel factor,”<sup>16</sup> Lucian highlights the inherent validity of his hybridity in comparison to the artificial hybridity of the philosopher sophists. While Lucian admits his hybrid literary genre is centaur-like, he distinguishes between the successful hybrid creation and the philosopher-sophists, characterising the hybrid philosophers as the embodiment of the savage centaur, overstepping their established boundaries and becoming a corrupting force.

Hybridity, in the context of Lucian’s works, takes on a dual nature, much like the dual audience of the works themselves, as it functions both to validate Lucian himself, while invalidating the contemporary philosophers. Just as the hybridity of Lucian is proven to be a reflection of his wisdom, it is the absence of *true* hybridity in the philosopher-sophists that serves to reveal their inability to strive towards true wisdom. What’s more, the philosopher-sophists become robbed of their capacity for

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<sup>14</sup> B. Stross, ‘The Hybrid Metaphor,’ 265.

<sup>15</sup> B. Stross, ‘The Hybrid Metaphor,’ 266.

<sup>16</sup> D.A. Kapchan and P. T. Strong, ‘Theorizing the Hybrid,’ 247.

‘evolution,’ being an inferior melding of philosophy and sophistry. Rather than becoming in essence a ‘successful’ form of the hybrid, they remain a corrupted source, who are portrayed as achieving quite the opposite effect to the Lucianic hybrid. The pseudo-hybrid, the pseudo-philosopher, is little more than a spokesperson for pseudo-wisdom.

Lucian’s hybrid genre, the centaur-like creature of Dialogue and Comedy, presents the features of non-elite literature through the medium of the elite. What follows is an examination of the rhetorical and literary tools by which such a hybrid is created, with a particular focus upon the presence of the actualised hybrid throughout the dialogues and essays. In so doing, it is clear that Lucian utilises hybridity and its associated characteristics to skilfully critique the so-called wisdom of contemporary philosophers.

### **Sophists, Philosophers and Philosopher-Sophists**

The following section conducts an overview of the Second Sophistic and Lucian’s place within the time period, so as to provide a temporal basis from which to further the discussion. The significance of such an overview is great, as it allows for the zeitgeist of the era to be better understood. In so doing, it becomes clear that Lucian’s concern with hybridity derives precisely from his contemporary society. The Second Sophistic represents a period of renewed cultural activity, and facilitated an environment in which such hybridity of form and genre could occur.

The Second Sophistic cannot be defined in a single category, as this would disregard the multifaceted nature of both the texts and authors of this era. Philostratus, coining the term Second Sophistic in his *Lives of the Sophists* (VS. 1.481.16ff), does apply the term ‘sophist’ to some who were predominantly engaged in philosophical pursuits. (VS. 1.484.11ff). However, the philosophers who ‘had the reputation of sophists’ (ἐν δόξει τοῦ σοφιστεῦσαι VS. 1.491.6-7) are presented separately from those whom Philostratus considers sophists proper, suggesting a distinct but nevertheless close relationship between the two modes of intellectual inquiry. This distinction between the sophist and the philosopher sophist, as Eshleman deftly outlines, is part of

his own favouritism for those associated with Herodes Atticus,<sup>17</sup> yet it nevertheless offers a useful starting point for determining the environment of the Second Sophistic period. What follows is not intended to be a comprehensive outline of this incredibly complex time. Rather, I will examine the aspects of the Second Sophistic that may influence or define Lucian's position within the period, focusing primarily upon the agonistic environment that was bred among sophists and orators, and the way in which the Second Sophistic itself exudes hybridity of culture, language and philosophy.

The hybrid nature of philosophy during the Second Sophistic is shown to be a core concern for the satirist Lucian. Throughout the works of Lucian and his contemporaries, it is possible to view the influence of hybridity upon the rhetorical stage, though this is not to be confused with the potentially hybrid nature of different philosophical schools' convergence of ideals. Many authors' declamatory assertions are underpinned by their individual assessment of a growing philosophical syncretism, a concerted attempt to successfully position themselves in the midst of this hybrid, fluid culture. In what follows, I will outline some of the core discussions around the Second Sophistic and their relationship to Lucian's works, prior to turning to a more focused discussion of Lucian himself.

Secondary scholarship on the Second Sophistic and the literature of the period has been thriving since Bowersock's 1969 *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire*. Bowersock's work sets up the significant role the sophists of the Roman Empire played in the creation of a cohesive culture, spreading sophistic teachings through the power of rhetoric. It is from this most basic definition of sophistic practice that the following overview develops, as it is possible to view the period as embracing a form of cultural hybridity. These 'Greek Sophists,' stretch between Roman and Greek identities, elite and non-elite audiences, and traditional and modern genres, allowing the period to become a Protean figure in its own right, "beguiling but endlessly elusive."<sup>18</sup> Bowersock's work underpins the beguiling and elusive nature of the Second Sophistic, and outlines its core features.

Following Bowersock, a wealth of secondary scholarship began to emerge, with *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* breathing new life into studies of this period.

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<sup>17</sup> K. Eshleman, 'Defining the Circle of Sophists: Philostratus and the Construction of the Second Sophistic' *Classical Philology* 103 (2008): 395-413.

<sup>18</sup> T. Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 19.

Anderson, who is discussed in greater detail in regards to his influential work on Lucian, “confirms the image of sophists as vain, contentious and sometimes superficial”<sup>19</sup> in his 1995 work *The Second Sophistic*. Anderson’s work primarily aims to set up a historical context of the era, and outlines the core genres that sophists engaged with in an attempt to satisfy their own vanity. Of greatest importance is Anderson’s recognition of the sophistic striving for fame and reputation, and the fact that Lucian positions himself simultaneously within and outside of this contentious group. He aptly states as his discussion draws to a close that “only Lucian will have a clear vision of the vanity of it all, but his is still a testimony from within. We do not have to look far for characteristic self-display, rhetorical overindulgence and a measure of sheer conceit; but there is also conviction, real skill, and not a little wit as well.”<sup>20</sup> Anderson’s views on Lucian in the context of the Second Sophistic provide a core basis from which the following discussion is framed, as what follows further engages with Lucian’s position as being both in and outside this convoluted period of self-expression.

A primary characteristic of the period of the Second Sophistic relates directly to the inherent divide between Greek and Roman cultural ideals. Swain’s *Hellenism and Empire* offers scholars an informed overview of this divide, focussing primarily upon issues of cultural identity and the desire for authors of this period to justify and rationalise their position within a period that denies definition. Of significance to the following discussion is Swain’s discussion of Lucian, outlining his own self-presentation as simultaneously Greek, Roman and Syrian. Swain focusses on the way in which Lucian seamlessly integrates himself into Roman culture and elitism, while also congratulating the wealth of wisdom that may be derived from Greek culture. Crucially, he states, “Lucian’s adopted cultural identity as a Hellene did not clash with his loyalties to Rome’s Empire. But in cases where Greek culture was abused by Roman power, it is clear where he stood.”<sup>21</sup> It is this tension between Greek culture and Roman power that serves to inform the following discussion, as it is possible to see Lucian’s concern with such a divide being centred upon the sophists of the period. The Roman

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<sup>19</sup> D. Lateiner, review of *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire* by G. Anderson, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) quoting the volume’s blurb (<http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/1994/94.10.06.html>).

<sup>20</sup> G. Anderson, *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Routledge, 1983) 233.

<sup>21</sup> S. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism and Power in the Greek World AD 50-250*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 329.



drive towards power and reputation stand at loggerheads to claims to Greek wisdom, and it is the philosopher-sophists who profit and propagate such corruption of Hellenic culture.

This tension between Greek and Roman culture is further discussed in König's *Greek Literature in the Roman Empire*. König provides a useful and informed starting point from which to assess the literary hybridity that pervaded the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, which is significant in the context of the intense cultural hybridity of the period. The work, organised by genre, encourages a view of the literary environment as fluid and varied, exploring notions of authorship (or lack thereof) throughout the works and their role within the broader conception among the educated elite. Of particular importance for the following discussion is of course his analysis of satire, and while König's focus is rightly structured around the figure of Lucian, the importance for the following discussion is upon his identification of features of the Second Sophistic ethos that may be elucidated from the genre. These features include a focus upon elitism, rhetoric, reputation and notions of Greek-ness, however in the context of satire, it is possible to see a direct opposition to such traits.

At the most basic level, the extant texts of this period are inherently a product of elite society, with authors frequently trumpeting their own education and intellect, often in a concerted effort to better their reputation. This, as will be shown, is precisely the concern of Lucian's satire, as it is this focus upon reputation that comes to override philosophical teaching. Nevertheless, external to the genre of satire, the presentation of an elite and learned voice is crucial. König highlights these elite pretences in the context of the ancient novel,<sup>22</sup> noting specifically that the elitism that pervades these texts is directly presented as *Greek* superiority, idealising Classical Greece in direct opposition to the comparatively foreign culture of the Roman Empire.<sup>23</sup>

Another significant contribution to the scholarly world of the Second Sophistic is Eshleman's *The Social World of Intellectuals in the Roman Empire: Sophists, Philosophers and Christians*. Eshleman's work deals, as the title suggests, with the process of defining and understanding the extremely varied culture that surrounds the Second Sophistic, paying particular attention to the processes of self-definition that

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<sup>22</sup> For a detailed analysis of the ancient novel and modes of defining the novel, see N. Holzberg, *The Ancient Novel*, translated by C. Jackson-Holzberg. (London: Routledge) 1995 and S. Bartsch, *Decoding the Ancient Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press) 1989.

<sup>23</sup> J. König, *Greek Literature in the Roman Empire*, (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2009) 19-21.

governs individuals living in the Roman Empire during this time. The notions of being an insider and an outsider are returned to in this work, although Eshleman brings her focus inwards, discussing the tension between being a sophist, a philosopher, or a Christian. Chapters Two and Three of Eshleman's work in particular are of the primary focus here, as much of the following discussion similarly considers the divide between these three distinct modes of self-fashioning. Eshleman states that the "stereotyped hierarchy of expert speaker and inexpert audience is belied by the fact that audiences were typically dominated by members of the educated elite, especially other specialists – whose presence was in fact a point of pride for our subjects."<sup>24</sup> This, in the context of inclusion and exclusion, is an important consideration for the following discussion, as Lucian's works often deal with concerns over the insider and the outsider, and the perception of inclusion. The philosopher-sophists, self-fashioning themselves as insiders to the sphere of the educated elite are not considered to be educated on account of their wisdom, but rather their appearance of wisdom through public display. It is their pride over their inclusion that Lucian disparages frequently, showing that such inclusion is merely a veil for their own desires for reputation and fame.

It is also worth noting the role of Schmidt and Fleury's edited collection, *Perceptions of the Second Sophistic and its Times/Regards sur la Seconde Sophistique et son époque*, which consolidates a number of the themes outlined above. Many of the papers draw upon these notions of inclusion and exclusion, focusing upon the rhetorical tools sophists of the era may use in order to disseminate their views to the willing audience. Of particular importance is Henderson's chapter, as its discussion of the non-elite in this context stands to underpin the motives and techniques of Lucian himself. Lucian in particular stands as an outsider to the Second Sophistic, both ethnically and in terms of genre. Henderson states that Lucian is unable to manipulate the themes and tropes that the 'real' sophists utilise in order to fully integrate himself into this 'circle' of sophists, as his "unconcealed, yet de-emphasized 'Assyrian' ethnicity was obtrusive enough in live performance to deny him success in the sophists' defining, public medium."<sup>25</sup> Lucian's stark absence from literary accounts of the era serves as evidence of this, however in the discussion that follows, I argue that there is more to be drawn

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<sup>24</sup> K. Eshleman, *The Social World of Intellectuals in the Roman Empire: Sophists, Philosophers and Christians*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 89.

<sup>25</sup> I. Henderson, 'The Second Sophistic and Non-Elite Speakers' in *Perceptions of the Second Sophistic and its Times – Regards sur la Seconde Sophistique et son époque*, edited by T. Schmidt and P. Fleury, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011) 29.

from this ‘failure’ to be included among the sophists. Lucian’s use of sophistic tools and techniques rather allows for him to be precisely integrated enough in order to achieve his satirical goal, being able to position himself as both within this ‘circle’ and distinctly outside of it.

More recently, Richter and Johnson’s *Handbook of the Second Sophistic* is a much-needed contribution to Second Sophistic studies, compiling an informed and considered overview of the time period and its influential authors. The Handbook compiles many ways of understanding the Second Sophistic, and its large temporal and literary scope earn it the worthy title of ‘*Forty Three Ways of Thinking about the So-called "Second Sophistic."*’<sup>26</sup> Richter’s own chapter in the work deals with Lucian, and is significant for the following discussion for the recognition of Lucian as an “ethno-cultural hybrid”.<sup>27</sup> Like Richter, I do not make any attempt to discern the real Lucian behind his own literary persona, but rather I draw on the hybridity of ethnicity and culture evoked from the biographical tradition. Lucian is himself, a hybrid, and it is proposed that his own hybridity serves to facilitate and enhance his own satire by engaging with the overall hybridity of the era itself.

As the above overview has shown, scholarship on the Second Sophistic is extremely varied, and I make no attempt to discuss the full range of perspectives upon the literature and culture of the time. Rather, through the select authors outlined above, it becomes clear that the works of Lucian occupy something of a unique position. The philosopher-sophists of Lucian’s works are portrayed as proponents of wisdom, who use rhetorical techniques to acquire and solidify their own reputation. Lucian however, being an individual who is both a part of the culture and outside of it, stands at the outskirts of such vanity, using his own hybridity to critique the philosopher-sophists who dominate the Second Sophistic. Lucian represents the hybridity of culture, of ethnicity, and of class, and it is his role as a ‘middle-man’ that serves to facilitate his critique. The philosopher-sophists too, are hybrids, but their role within the community positions them as corrupted and corrupting hybrids; they are neither sophists nor

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<sup>26</sup> J. Alvares, review of *The Oxford Handbook of the Second Sophistic* by D.S. Richter and W.A. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017; <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2018/2018-07-10.html>).

<sup>27</sup> D. S. Richter, ‘Lucian of Samosata’ in *The Oxford Handbook of The Second Sophistic*, edited by D. S. Richter and W. A. Johnson, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) 327.

philosophers, but a vile mix of both, producing the appearance of wisdom for the sake of their own reputation.

### **Who is this Lucian person anyway?**

As noted above, the following dissertation makes no attempt to discern the biography of Lucian of Samosata. For my purposes, the focus is strictly upon the way in which Lucian constructs his works in order to critique the philosopher-sophists. Nevertheless, it is important to outline some of the core features of the tradition surrounding Lucian, especially given the wealth of scholarship that has been produced in recent years.

Lucian of Samosata was born in Syria during the second century AD,<sup>28</sup> composing satirical dialogues and treatises. Little more is definitively known about the figure of Lucian, and while attempts have been made to infer biographical information from his works, it is crucial to understand that this can only be speculation. Much of the speculation regarding the real persona of Lucian derives from the sheer range of characters that he includes in his works, with each of these characters standing as a representation of the overall message that Lucian wishes to present. The alignment of these characters with the person of Lucian is attributed to the similarity of the characters' names and personalities to his own, making the figure of Lucian even more beguiling and complex. Though the Lucianic character is a core feature of his works, the following discussion chooses to focus less upon the character of Lucian, and rather considers more heavily the characteristics of his works overall.<sup>29</sup>

It is crucial to note the work of Bompaire, who in 1958 revitalised scholarly studies in Lucian with his volume *Lucien écrivain: Imitation et creation*. Bompaire's work is particularly exhaustive, and offers a valuable insight into many facets of Lucian's works, namely regarding their attribution and inspiration. Bompaire's consideration of the primary figures of influence for Lucian and his subsequent

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<sup>28</sup> The exact date of Lucian's birth is unknown. The Suda states that he wrote during Trajan's reign (λ 683), however secondary scholarship, through analysis of his works proposes that he was born following Trajan's time as Emperor. For a detailed discussion of this, see C.P. Jones, *Culture and Society in Lucian*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986) 167ff and J.A. Hall, *Lucian's Satire* (New York: Arno Press, 1981) 13-16.

<sup>29</sup> For a detailed and constructive discussion of the Lucianic character and its role in his satirical persona, see A. Camerotto, *Gli occhi e la lingua della satira. Studi sull'eroe satirico in Luciano de Samosata* (Milan: Mimesis Edizioni, 2014).

manipulation of their respective works positions Bompaire's work as one of the core studies for Lucianic scholars, despite its relative age.

Following Bompaire, one of the early scholars looking at the satires of Lucian is Baldwin, who positions his satires in the context of the Roman Empire, and proposes that Lucian should be read within this context,<sup>30</sup> a theme which continues with his monograph, *Studies in Lucian*.<sup>31</sup> As alluded to earlier, it is possible to identify a period of renewed interest in the satirist by this point, signified not only by Baldwin's works, but also that of Anderson. *Lucian: Theme and Variation in the Second Sophistic*, discusses the way in which certain tropes or themes present themselves in Lucian, stating that he "varies a small amount of material to an exhaustive degree."<sup>32</sup> Of importance in the following discussion is Lucian's critique of the philosopher-sophists of the period, as what follows delves into the way in which Lucian constructs this critique. It is argued that through the theme of hybridity, Lucian is able to extend his satire of the philosopher-sophists and applies this corrupted hybrid theme to the state of humanity and the gods.

An additional source worthy of note is Branham's *Unruly Eloquence*, which aims to focus more upon Lucian's manipulation of the serio-comic genre. Branham's work discusses the role of humour more broadly, and notes that Lucian's use of the satire serves to reflect upon the use by his predecessors, namely that of Plato through the trope of the ignorant interlocutor. Lucian's use of the serio-comic, I argue, extends beyond such a role, as it is possible to view Lucian's own reflection upon his use of the genre. His 'creation' of a hybrid genre, one that merges the features of dialogue and comedy, serves to reflect upon the hybridity of the Second Sophistic period, and ultimately, those who write during it.

These three core texts form the basis for any study of Lucian's works, and allow for an understanding of both his role in the social milieu of the Second Sophistic, and the core features that pervade his work. More recently is the work of ní Mheallaigh, who primarily focusses upon identifying the distinction between reality and fiction in Lucian's works, and other authors of the Second Sophistic more broadly. Of particular significance for the following discussion is ní Mheallaigh's assessment of hybridity, and its relationship to Lucian's works and biographical tradition. While she speaks of

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<sup>30</sup> B. Baldwin, 'Lucian as Social Satirist' *Classical Quarterly* 11:2 (1961): 199-208.

<sup>31</sup> B. Baldwin, *Studies in Lucian* (Toronto: Hakert, 1973).

<sup>32</sup> G. Anderson, *Theme and Variation in the Second Sophistic*, (Leiden: Brill, 1976).

Lucian's hybridity predominantly regarding his use of hybrid genres, she nevertheless notes the effect that such hybridity has upon the reception of his work, in the context of addressing high and low cultures. ní Mheallaigh aptly states:

Lucian's hybrid and mutable 'sculptures' hint at the imaginative possibilities of the 'open' literary work, while the glutinous plasticity of Lucian's wax and clay evokes the visceral abandon of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque and suggests too, an honesty or openness about the creative processes that lurk behind every completed artefact, but which the more refined 'classical' materials such as gold or marble less readily disclose.<sup>33</sup>

It is in this context that the following dissertation should be viewed, as I aim to expand upon the work of ní Mheallaigh, and apply this hybridity of form and substance to a number of Lucian's other works, and show that his own hybridity serves to directly critique the corrupted hybridity of the philosopher-sophists.

### **Lucian the Literary Cynic**

Lucian's attitude to Cynicism has implications for the interpretation of his satire. Bernays' *Lucian und die Kyniker*<sup>34</sup> remains one of the core texts for considering the use of Cynicism and Cynic ideals by Lucian, yet it should not be ignored that much work has been done in subsequent years. Consequently, what follows does not intend to be a comprehensive overview of the development of Cynicism, but rather aims to underscore the key tenets of the philosophy, and view the use of the doggish philosophy as a foundational position from which Lucian conducts his satire. Of particular importance is the effect the Cynic doctrine has upon the literary sphere, evidenced through the early Cynics such as Diogenes and Crates. As will be shown, the Cynic philosophy undergoes a number of changes from its first incarnation to the second century AD, attracting praise and scorn in equal measure. Cynicism holds a unique place in Lucian's works, being portrayed as the essence of the hybrid philosopher (*Fug.*

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<sup>33</sup> K. Ní Mheallaigh, *Reading Fiction with Lucian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) 23.

<sup>34</sup> J. Bernays, *Lucian und die Kyniker*, (Berlin: W. Hertz, 1879).

10), yet nevertheless acts as a core means for Lucian to ensure a dual audience for his works. Its characterisation as the “philosophy of the proletariat”<sup>35</sup> allows for Lucian to engage with both upper and lower-class concerns, encouraging a broader audience engagement with this satire. Lucian adopts what can be understood as literary Cynicism,<sup>36</sup> utilising the ideals of the Cynic doctrine to facilitate the appeal of his satirical works. In what follows, I argued that literary cynicism allows Lucian to adopt the hybrid genre, yet also engage with his hybrid audience, bridging the space between high and low culture. There is a distinct separation between ‘types’ of Cynicism, with the true and uncorrupted Cynic being viewed as a relic of the Golden Age.

The founding of the Cynic philosophy is most commonly ascribed to Diogenes of Sinope, the irreverent, bedraggled philosopher who took up residence in a tub.<sup>37</sup> Rather than attempting to discern the character of Diogenes, the focus of the following discussion rests primarily upon what can be considered the core principles of this initial incarnation of the Cynic doctrine.<sup>38</sup> Dudley notes that much of what is understood about Diogenes and early Cynicism derives from later literature, and he divides this literature into two “classes” – that which occupies the Cynic and Stoic philosophical works, and that which concentrates primarily upon anecdotes and stories surrounding his persona. He notes that the works of Crates, Diogenes’ successor, are the “best authority for contemporary cynic practices,”<sup>39</sup> and through the idealistic portrayals of him in later philosophical sources, it is possible to see the significant influence the character of Diogenes had upon the expansion and development of the doctrine proper.

At the core of the Cynic doctrine are two principles, these being *παρρησία* and *ἀναίδεια*. Outspokenness is essential for the desire to become a *σοφός*, for it allows resistance to the “coercion of tyrants,” and the capacity to “expose the pretensions of ‘intellectuals’ and politicians.”<sup>40</sup> What’s more, shamelessness comes to underpin the

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<sup>35</sup> D.R. Dudley, *History of Cynicism: From Diogenes to the 6<sup>th</sup> Century*, (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1967) xi.

<sup>36</sup> Bosman states that “Lucian was attracted to the literary potential of the cynic style,” carefully distinguishing between literary cynicism and actual cynicism (P.R. Bosman, ‘Lucian Among the Cynics: The ‘Zeus Refuted’ and the Cynic Tradition’ *Classical Quarterly* 62:2 (2012): 793).

<sup>37</sup> The evidence for Antisthenes as the founder of Cynicism is not strong, as Dudley has argued (D.R. Dudley, *History of Cynicism*, 1ff).

<sup>38</sup> For an overview of ancient Cynicism and its relationship to modern interpretations see J.C. Laursen, ‘Cynicism Then and Now’, *Iris: European Journal of Philosophy and Public Debate* 1:2 (2009) 469-482.

<sup>39</sup> D.R. Dudley, *History of Cynicism*, 18.

<sup>40</sup> D.R. Dudley, *History of Cynicism*, 28.

Cynic's capacity to speak freely – there is no need to conform to social convention, but rather one must become dog-like, free from any particular Greek ideal, living in accordance with nature.<sup>41</sup> It is during the third century BC that Cynicism comes to be an influential and pervasive doctrine throughout the Greek world. Diogenes had already believed in the importance of presenting his beliefs in a form that embraced the populace, speaking not in a wholly serious manner, but in a form that could be easily remembered.<sup>42</sup> This characteristic of the Cynic speech became increasingly important through the writers of the third century BC, as the serio-comic diatribe was embraced and developed by individuals who were perhaps less concerned with treating Cynicism as a way of life, but more as a tool with which to present critique and satire, with such a feature of the philosophy being heavily adopted by Lucian some centuries following.

In what follows, the figure of Menippus will be the primary focus. It is a well established fact that Lucian took much inspiration from the Cynic from Gadara, and thus in understanding his literary predecessor, much can be gleaned about Lucian's own Cynic background.<sup>43</sup> For Menippus, Cynicism is a literary tool, and it is this aspect that is of greatest importance for Lucian. The tropes of Cynicism, despite Lucian's overt critique of contemporary practitioners, are nevertheless crucial to his own satire, justifying the hybridity of form, genre and audience.

Dudley states that “the name of Menippus is familiar; yet we have surprisingly little detailed information about him; like the Cheshire cat, he has faded away to a grin.”<sup>44</sup> Despite the absence of information about his life, Menippus nevertheless is a persistent figure throughout literary history. Diogenes Laertius dedicates a chapter to the figure of Menippus, stating that there are thirteen works attributed to him (D.L. 2.8), although these are now lost. He states that his “books overflow with laughter,” and although the nature of his satire are not discussed, secondary scholarship has made significant strides in attempting to discern the core features, and their reception throughout antiquity and beyond. Relihan is at the forefront of such studies, with his

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<sup>41</sup> D.R. Dudley, *History of Cynicism*, 29. See too W.D. Desmond, *The Greek Praise of Poverty: Origins of Ancient Cynicism*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2006), 27ff.

<sup>42</sup> D.R. Dudley, *History of Cynicism*, 110-111. Desmond too, notes the importance of speaking freely and adopting shamelessness in order to effectively present an argument to the masses (W.D. Desmond, *The Greek Praise of Poverty*, 154ff).

<sup>43</sup> The primary discussion of on Lucian's relationship to Menippus is Helm's *Lukian und Menipp* (R. Helm, *Lucian und Menipp*. (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1906), however in more recent years, Bosman's work on identifying the Cynic elements in Lucian provides a useful overview for the persistent presence of Menippus (P. R. Bosman, 'Lucian Among the Cynics', 785-795).

<sup>44</sup> D.R. Dudley, *History of Cynicism*, 69.



work *Ancient Menippean Satire*. The primary feature of Menippean satire, argues Relihan, is the presence of an incompetent narrator, who is satirised through his quest for philosophical knowledge, a feature of the main character of the *Satyricon*, Encolpius. Relihan outlines the presence of this Menippean satire in a number of works from antiquity, categorising them as works which “strain the limits”<sup>45</sup> of convention. Menippean satire, however, is of course not limited to the works of antiquity, as W.D. Weinbrot aptly observes. He defines the genre as “a form that uses at least two other genres, languages, cultures, or changes of voice to oppose a dangerous, false, or specious and threatening orthodoxy.”<sup>46</sup> It is this broad-reaching and ultimately anti-authoritarian aspect of the satirical form that facilitates its use throughout contemporary culture. The works of Bakhtin on Menippean satire systematically break down the core aspects of the genre, so it is important to consider these here. Bakhtin’s treatment of Menippean satire encourages the view that the very nature of the satire defies definition, however its primary features include the presence of the carnivalesque, the fantastical, and importantly, a reflection upon philosophical truth through these overarching themes.<sup>47</sup>

It is not difficult to identify such features in the works of Lucian, especially given the prominence of Menippus as a character in his works. Two works in particular, *Icaromenippus* and *Nekyomanteia*, feature Menippus as the main character, and he frequently appears in the underworld throughout Lucian’s *Dialogues of the Dead*. This alignment with Menippean themes and techniques, given Menippus’ identification as a Cynic, is crucial for studying the works of Lucian, and it is from this that we are able to see Lucian engaging with a form of *literary* cynicism. As Bosman states, “the shifting stance and absence of philosophical commitment disallow easy equation of philosophical ideas with the convictions of the historical figure.”<sup>48</sup> Thus, I argue that the Cynic doctrine that pervades Lucian’s works is to be considered literary Cynicism; it is not a reflection of a particular philosophical stance, but rather, a tool by which Lucian may critique contemporary philosophy as a whole. As will be shown, the Cynic

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<sup>45</sup> J. Relihan, *Ancient Menippean Satire* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993) 187.

<sup>46</sup> H.D. Weinbrot, *Menippean Satire Reconsidered: From Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005) 6.

<sup>47</sup> M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky’s Poetics*, edited and translated by C. Emerson and M. Holquist, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 114. For an organised outline of Bakhtin’s primary principles of Menippean Satire, see M.K. Booker, *Flann O’Brien, Bakhtin and Menippean Satire* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995) 143ff.

<sup>48</sup> P.R. Bosman, *Lucian Among the Cynics*, 785.

philosopher is explicitly characterised as the worst of the philosophical hybrids, yet is nevertheless the embodiment of Lucianic ideals, harmoniously mixing low and high culture so as to unveil the corruption of the philosophical hybrid.

There are four key dialogues of Lucian's that present a fuller treatment of the Cynic doctrine. Of these four, two may be considered to be a praise of a Cynicism,<sup>49</sup> while the other two represent direct disagreement with the doctrine. In what follows, I will discuss those which are considered a critique of Cynicism, and show the way in which these dialogues are not strictly a critique of Cynicism, but rather a critique of the hybridity of those who follow such a doctrine. The dialogue of the false Cynic, Peregrinus, treats Cynics as the epitome of the corrupted philosopher-sophist. As will be shown, while these dialogues present themselves as obliquely critiquing the philosophy and those who practice it, it is crucial to view them within their context.

The Lucianic epistolographic text detailing his account of the death of the philosopher *Peregrinus* is a core starting point for assessing Lucian's relationship with the Cynic philosophy. Lucian presents his authorial voice as wholly against the actions of Peregrinus, the quintessential philosopher-sophist who is concerned with little more than his own reputation and glory. He himself is a hybrid figure – not in form, but in his role as the Christian-turned-Cynic, which is treated throughout the dialogue. Yet as König notes, there are additional intermingled roles that the character of Peregrinus plays – he notes the allusion to not only Socratic practices, but also the practices of the Brahmins.<sup>50</sup> Through Fields' careful analysis of the text,<sup>51</sup> it is clear that there exists an alignment between Lucian and the Cynic doctrine. It is not the Cynicism of Peregrinus that offends the satirist, but rather the act of striving towards glory through a form of Cynic hybridity.<sup>52</sup> Critique is consistently hurled at the followers of Peregrinus, who

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<sup>49</sup> Lucian's *Demonax* and *Cynicus* are loosely regarded to be works that praise the Cynic doctrine. *Demonax*, as the title suggests, details the life and achievements of this Cynic philosopher, whom we know of exclusively from Lucian's work (A.M. Harmon, *Lucian I.* 141). The *Cynicus*, is considered to be a pseudo-work, but such an assertion is somewhat simplistic, as it is based purely upon the fact that the dialogue serves to defend and praise Cynicism, and thus I attribute the work to Lucian. For the purposes of the following discussion however, these two dialogues are not discussed in full. What is significant is the dialogues that seem to openly critique the Cynic doctrine, as they serve to underpin Lucian's use of hybridity to critique contemporary philosophical practice.

<sup>50</sup> J. König, 'The Cynic and Christian Lives of Peregrinus' in *The Limits of Ancient Biography* by B. McGing and J. Mossman, (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2006) 240.

<sup>51</sup> D. Fields, 'The Reflections of Satire: Lucian and Peregrinus' *Transactions of the American Philosophical Association* 143: 1 (2013) 213-245.

<sup>52</sup> Criticisms regarding attention seeking are found Diogenes Laertius' biography of Diogenes.

are foolish enough to believe and worship his faux philosophical stance. However as König notes, this too can be viewed as representing Lucian's own alignment with the Cynic doctrine. When he openly criticises Peregrinus in front of his followers, the Cynics flock to defend his honour, and are described as almost tearing the satirist "limb from limb...just as Actaeon was by his dogs or his cousin Pentheus by the Maenads" (*Peregr.* 2). The choice of likeness here suggests more than the savagery of their attack, as it also implies that Lucian is being attacked by his own kin or associates.<sup>53</sup> Lucian does not disparage Peregrinus for his philosophical doctrine, but the manner in which he conducts himself. He is not only a fraud, but he is an incompetent fraud<sup>54</sup> - the overt desire for glory is an embarrassment to the 'true' dedicatees of Cynicism.

This distinction between 'true' Cynicism and 'incompetent' Cynicism is crucial for the following discussion, as it is argued that such a sentiment exists also in Lucian's *Fugitivi*. As has been noted, this dialogue is the primary motivation for considering the *Cynicus* to be falsely attributed,<sup>55</sup> an argument which I consider superficial. The Cynic is portrayed as the epitome of corrupted hybridity, however the κυνικὸς βίος itself is not the target of critique. During the Second Century AD, many authors expressed their distaste towards the Cynics, yet nevertheless consider these distinct from true representatives of the philosophy. Instead the contemporary Cynics are portrayed as "bring[ing] the name of philosophy into disgrace"<sup>56</sup> Lucian's *Fugitivi* is no exception; the contemporary Cynics cannot be compared to the likes of Diogenes, Antisthenes or Crates (*Fug.* 20), and with these contemporary Cynics acting as representatives of the philosophy, the populace are now scornful of the school itself (*Fug.* 21).

The focus for the following discussion is the consistent representation of the Cynic philosophy as a hybrid creature. In *Fugitivi*, Philosophy begins her tirade against contemporary philosophers, and specifically states that philosophers themselves have not caused her any dishonour. Rather, it is those who are in the middle of the philosophers and the populace; they appear to be philosophers in "deportment, glance and gait," (*Fug.* 4), yet in truth they are ignorant and insulting to the name of philosophy. In this first instance, the fraudulent philosophers are clearly characterised

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<sup>53</sup> König, 'The Cynic and Christian Lives of Peregrinus,' 244.

<sup>54</sup> König, 'The Cynic and Christian Lives of Peregrinus,' 247.

<sup>55</sup> J. Bridge, 'On the Authorship of the *Cynicus* of Lucian' *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 18 (1888): 33.

<sup>56</sup> D.R. Dudley *History of Cynicism*, 145.

as being hybrids, being literally described as ἐν μεταχμίῳ.<sup>57</sup> Further in the dialogue, the sophists are described as like the centaur, a mixture of false pretensions and philosophy (*Fug.* 10), and the woman captured by the runaway slave-cynics proclaims that they are a “dog at the front, and lion at the back, and in the middle, a χίμαιρα (*Fug.* 30), emphasising the monstrosity of the hybrid.

This hybridity of the Cynic becomes especially important when considered in conjunction with the Cynic alignment with living in accordance with nature. In *Fugitivi*, Philosophy herself attacks the contemporary Cynics, critiquing the lavish existence of the fraudulent philosophers. To them, she states, their life appears to be as in the age of Kronos, the gifts and adoration of the populace was as if honey was coming from the heavens into their mouths (*Fug.* 17; *Ov. Met.* 1.88). Martin discusses the relationship between the idealised Golden Age and the Cynic philosophy and identifies such an existence in a number of authors from antiquity. Notably, he highlights that life in the age of Kronos becomes a core feature of the Cynic view of living in accordance with nature, citing the lifestyle of Diogenes as representing a Golden Age existence among the corruption of the Iron Age.<sup>58</sup> The Iron Age becomes the beginning of civilisation, a triumph of mankind but nevertheless a period of corrupted virtue. Civilisation, as Moles notes, is a corrupting force on account of “all the evils it brings with it – greed, love of glory, wars, addiction to pleasures,” and thus virtue in the Cynic ideal is a “return to man’s natural state.” Such a return positions the Cynic life in the era of the Golden Age – prior to the pollution that is the civilised world.<sup>59</sup> What is significant about this divide between the ideal Golden Age and the corrupted Iron Age is that the Cynics similarly attribute a culprit to such a development. This corruption is considered to be fault of none other than Prometheus,<sup>60</sup> who is considered wholly responsible for the corruption of man’s natural state.<sup>61</sup> Promethean innovation has debased Golden Age existence, by introducing humanity to the evils of greed and love of glory.

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<sup>57</sup> Note that this term is more literally translated as ‘between two armies.’

<sup>58</sup> T.W. Martin, ‘The Chronos Myth in Cynic Philosophy,’ *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 31:1 (1997): 92.

<sup>59</sup> J.L. Moles, ‘Cynics and Politics,’ in *Justice and Generosity: Studies in Hellenistic Social and Political Philosophy* edited by A. Laks and M. Schofield, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 129-160.

<sup>60</sup> M-O. Goulet-Cazé, *L’ascèse cynique: Un commentaire de Diogène Laërce VI 70-71*, (Paris: Vrin, 1986) 59.

<sup>61</sup> Goulet-Cazé states that “Cynics were anti-Prometheus because Prometheus bequeathed culture upon humans” (M-O. Goulet-Cazé, *L’ascèse cynique*, 60).

There is a clear parallel to be drawn here, between Lucian's own literary hybrid innovations and the corruption of Cynicism. Lucian claims that he is not, as others had claimed, a "literary Prometheus," (*Prom. Es.*) on the basis of his innovations, yet concedes that there is a modicum of likeness in terms of his blending of genres (*Prom. Es.* 7). Viewed in the context of Lucian's alignment with Cynicism, his self-professed similarity to Prometheus invites a reflection upon apparent critique of the modern Cynic doctrine. The ideal Cynic life exists in the Golden Age, prior to the corruption of the Promethean hybrid innovation. Similarly, for Lucian, the ideal Cynics exist in a Golden Age, and while Lucian does not consider himself responsible for the fraudulent and polluted actions of the contemporary Cynics, he nevertheless positions him apart from them. He cannot deny that his literary works are of a hybrid nature, yet frames himself as a relic of the Cynic Golden Age. As will be shown, Lucian's alignment with the Cynic doctrine extends not only to include the idealising Golden Age but also to engage with its broader connections. Such connections, I argue, include an engagement with fable, and the Aesopic tradition.

Lucian utilises the ideals of Cynicism in the literary sphere to facilitate his critique of contemporary philosophers. The Cynic is inherently a form of hybrid – the dog-like philosopher – yet I also argue that striving towards a life in accordance with nature instils a further form of hybridity. By embracing *παρρησία* and *αὐταρχεία*, the Cynic philosophical doctrine positions itself as a hybrid between popular and elite culture. Diogenes Laertius states of Diogenes of Sinope that he discovered prattling (*τερπερίζω*) to be a more effective means of drawing a crowd to hear his speeches (D.L. 6.27), commenting upon the most effective means of providing philosophical discourse to the common audience. As Dudley states, "they [the populace] wanted the lessons of philosophy presented readily digested, and in an easily remembered form,"<sup>62</sup> a format to which the Cynic ideal readily conforms. Presenting philosophy or satire in this "readily digested" form is a technique that Lucian uses throughout his dialogues.

It what follows, it is argued that Lucian utilises and manipulates Cynicism to create a form of literary Cynicism – his works embody and align with Cynic ideals, facilitating their reception by a broader audience. The idealism of the Golden Age that so defines the Cynic path to virtue is reflected through the consistent and deliberate use of the Aesopic tradition, both in terms of the fables and the biographical caricature of

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<sup>62</sup> D.R. Dudley, *History of Cynicism*, 111.

Aesop himself. Lucian's literary Cynicism allows for him to utilise his hybrid genre as a reflection upon contemporary philosophy, while simultaneously maintaining distance from the critique itself. These pseudo-philosophers, he states, are corrupted hybrids not unlike the centaur, yet in his guise as the literary Cynic, he becomes exempt from such a charge.

### **Hybrid Sophists and φιλοδοξία**

Chapter One sets up a framework from which to fully understand Lucian's use of hybridity, by outlining the presence and use of Aesop and the fable tradition in his works. Aesopic hybridity presents itself as bridging the space between man and animal, yet also bridging literary spheres and social boundaries. By utilising this Aesopic framework, it is similarly possible to identify such hybridity in the works of Lucian, precisely through his overt engagement with Aesop and the fable. The chapter is divided into five main parts. First, the fable and its broader adoption throughout antiquity is considered, ranging from its use in early texts such as Hesiod, and following its presence throughout the Classical era, noting its particular significance in the genre of comedy. Secondly, this chapter discusses the anonymous *Life* of Aesop, as it is from this work that much of the tradition surrounding the figure of Aesop is derived, in particular the role of Aesop as the intelligent slave. Following this, it is outlined how the fable, Aesop and the broader tradition have a close relationship to the doctrine of Cynicism, with many features of the tradition such as the natural world and simplicity aligning well with the philosophy. With this association in mind, the chapter moves on to consider the role of the Aesopic tradition in the Second Sophistic period, as while there are similarities to its treatment earlier in antiquity, Aesop during this time is used less as a moral centre and more as a source of wisdom. Finally, the chapter turns to Lucian's use of the Aesopic, and to demonstrate the prevalence of the tradition throughout his works. It is from this background that an analysis of the Aesopic in Lucian may be conducted, for the rich and intricate history of the tradition is evident in the Lucianic treatment, and sets up a basis from which to discuss the hybridity of culture and society that defined Lucian's own satires.

Chapter Two expands upon the notion of the hybrid in Lucian's works, in particular focusing upon the imagery and symbolism of the centaur. Philosophy herself, in Lucian's *Fugitivi*, deems the philosopher-sophist to be not unlike the centaur - a

hybrid creature, incapable of being wholly dedicated to philosophy or to ignorance (Luc. *Fug.* 10). This motif of the philosopher-sophist being like the centaur is discussed in detail, as it is used to underpin what can be understood to be two distinct ‘forms’ of hybridity in Lucian. The first section of this chapter utilises Plato to define the nature of the sophist, showing the way in which Lucian uses these Platonic definitions in his satire. The following section then draws upon these definitions through a discussion of two core dialogues, the *Sale of Lives* and *The Fisherman*. In *Sale of Lives*, Lucian places a monetary value upon the philosopher-sophists, obliquely commenting upon their *philosophical* value. In the companion dialogue, *The Fisherman*, this motif is expanded upon. The representatives of various philosophical doctrines are shown to be fish lured in by gold, portraying them as literal hybrids who are driven merely by greed. The second half of this chapter delves deeper into the motif of the hybrid centaur, first outlining the symbolism of the centaur in antiquity, and assessing this symbolism in Lucian and identifying his manipulation of the motif more broadly. It is shown, through a comparative analysis of Lucian’s *Zeuxis* and *Symposium*, that the philosopher-sophist is a corrupted hybrid centaur, being uncivilised and uneducated.

Chapter Three focusses primarily on Lucian’s *Gallus*, for its representation of the talking animal as an interpretation of the hybrid form. Lucian utilises the talking rooster to critique the ideals that the philosopher-sophists espouse, positioning the animal hybrid as a greater source of wisdom than his human interlocutor. The first section of this chapter discusses the significance of speech more broadly, as its role in establishing ‘Greekness’ is pervasive throughout many texts of antiquity. In this context, it is then considered how the presence of animal speech is portrayed, particularly regarding the way in which it is utilised to defend or reject wisdom of animals and their capacity for reason. With broader perceptions of animal speech in mind, the chapter then turns to the *Gallus* dialogue. The dialogue features a reincarnated Pythagoras as a rooster, serving to comment upon the nature of philosophical wisdom. By positioning the wise philosopher in the body of a rooster, Lucian comments upon the present state of philosophy in his contemporary age. By comparing the wise alektro-Pythagoras with the ignorant Micyllus, Lucian differentiates between hybrid wisdom and hybrid corruption, as Micyllus is portrayed as driven by greed and appearance, only learning philosophical wisdom through the speaking animal.

Chapter Four approaches the hybrid by engaging with the motif of viewing from above. In the dialogue *Icaromenippus*, the title character attaches the wings of an eagle

and a vulture in order to ascend to the heavens, becoming a literal hybrid between human and animal. The chapter first identifies the use of ascent as a literary trope, focusing primarily upon its treatment in Plato and relationship to the ascent of the soul. The chapter considers this motif and its connection with virtue and wisdom in the context of two Lucianic dialogues, *Icaromenippus* and *Charon*. In both of these dialogues, the main characters ascend to the skies, and are able to look down upon the world from below. Here, it is possible to see a direct critique of the philosopher-sophists, as the primary motivation for Menippus' ascent to the heavens is his dissatisfaction with contemporary philosophy. This chapter then deals with various modes of viewing, with the two characters being granted sharpness of sight to see the world below them. This sight, as is outlined in the next section, can be identified as largely inhuman, with Menippus utilising the wings of the eagle, and Charon using the magic of Homeric verses. Crucially, in viewing from above, these two characters are able to see the effect that the philosopher-sophists have had upon humans below – they are shown to be driven purely by greed and reputation, the contemporary philosophers having corrupted the virtue of humanity.

Chapter Five, the final chapter, expands upon the themes treated in the previous one, discussing the corruption of the philosopher-sophists upon the heavens. This chapter first outlines the notion of hybrid deities, focusing upon the presence of hybrid deities that occupy the Graeco-Roman pantheon of gods. These hybrid gods come in many forms, and often have a form of cult following, inviting a collection of followers that often come to resemble the corrupted hybrid. It is shown that such a dichotomy between the singular and plural hybrid deity is similarly reflected in the make-up of the philosopher-sophists. In this chapter, three primary dialogues are discussed, *Parliament of the Gods*, *Jupiter Tragodus* and *Icaromenippus*, so as to show that the hybrid deities that now occupy the Olympian heavens are cast as corruptions themselves on account of the corrupted hybrid philosopher-sophists. Rather than the presence of hybrid gods reflecting a Lucianic distaste with hybrid deities, the presence of hybrid gods serves to exemplify the problem with the philosopher-sophists. The realm of the heavens is no longer solely occupied by 'real' gods, but also by those who merely appear divine, and it is necessary to discern the real from the false. Similarly, the false philosopher-sophist hybrids are poor replicas of the true philosopher, and have fooled everyone into thinking they are a source of true wisdom. The chapter concludes with a case study that



confirms such corruption, as the Lucianic dialogue *Peregrinus* is outlined, underpinning the desire for reputation that so defines these philosophical hybrids.

Throughout these five chapters, it is shown that Lucian's dialogues utilise hybridity in order to denigrate the philosopher-sophists who characterise the Second Sophistic period. Owing to their greed and desire for fame, they are unable and unwilling to strive towards true wisdom. Rather, their professions of false wisdom are shown to have no benefit for the broader community, corrupting the makeup of both humanity and the divine sphere. Crucially, Lucian's philosopher-sophist hybrid should be distinguished from the successful hybrid who acts as an improvement of both its separate halves. It is thus clear that Lucian uses the motif of hybridity to both disparage the philosopher-sophists and simultaneously heighten his own success as a hybrid. His own melding of dialogue and comedy has created a genre that is not unlike the centaur. Yet this centaur-like creation is neither a corruption nor a deception, but rather, Lucian successfully merges these genres to create a form that speaks to both high and low cultures, critiquing the deception of the so-called philosophers by using their own tricks.

## Chapter One

### Aesop and the Fable

*A donkey put on the skin of a lion and went around frightening all the animals. The donkey saw a fox and tried to frighten her too, but she had heard his voice first, so she said to the donkey, 'You can be sure that I too would have been afraid, if I had not already heard the sound of your bray.'*

*Likewise, there are certain ignorant people whose outward affectations give them an air of importance, but their true identity comes out as soon as they open their big mouths.*<sup>63</sup>

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*The Fox, the Donkey and the Lion Skin*

The hybrid animal, in its many incarnations, plays a particular role in the literary imagination of the classical world. The following chapter assesses the hybrid animal in the context of the Aesopic fable, as assessing hybridity in this context serves to frame the bulk of the following dissertation. The hybrid animal, as it is depicted in the Aesopic fable, bears similarity to the Lucianic treatment of the hybrid, in that hybridity is presented as having a dual purpose or nature. The fable anthropomorphises its animal characters, by its very nature dealing with animal-human hybrids. However it also engages with a form of cultural hybridity, combining what may be understood as 'low' and 'high' cultural spheres. Aesop as an individual, drawn from the representation in the anonymous *Life of Aesop*, forms a precedent from which to consider Lucian's own hybridity, due to the way in which the two author-figures are situated between the lower classes and the elite, both in genre and in circumstance. Consequently, the fable and Aesop himself form a useful framework within which to structure the analysis of hybridity in Lucianic satire. The following discussion provides an assessment of the core features of the fable and the figure of Aesop. By identifying these features, it is thus possible to view Lucian's satire through this Aesopic framework on account of their mutual engagement with notions of hybridity. Aesopic hybridity presents itself as bridging the space between man and animal, yet also bridging literary spheres and social boundaries. By utilising this Aesopic framework, it is similarly possible to

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<sup>63</sup> *Aesop's Fables* translated by L. Gibbs, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 154.

identify such hybridity in the works of Lucian, precisely through his overt engagement with Aesop and the fable.

In his analysis of Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, Winkler sees in the Anonymous *Life of Aesop* a resistance to elite culture, identifying the use of what may be deemed 'lower-class' themes, embedded in narratives concerned with non-elite intellect. Winkler states of the *Life* that the synthesis of vulgar themes with intellectual pursuits is "not the uncensored reality of low life, but represents rather a specific animus against the claims of the educated elite to have proprietary rights over wisdom and shrewdness."<sup>64</sup> This tension between the elite and the non-elite, or the strong and the weak, is a core feature of the fable genre. Clayton notes that the fable offers an analogy, through the use of animal characters, to actualised "hierarchy and power relations," presenting a politically charged image to both low and high cultures. The fables offer a "cautionary tale" to the members of the lower class, portraying the state of their subordination by the stronger, elite classes. Yet the fables can also act as a tool by the elite classes to solidify their position, "indoctrinating" the lower classes with lessons in subordination.<sup>65</sup> Yet Clayton also notes that through the *differences* between the fable and actualised society, it is possible to view the genre as one promoting the freedom of the lower classes from their position below the elite. This, he states, is based on the Aristotelian assessment of animals as incapable of reason, implying that the human audience of the fables, being comparatively reasoned creatures, have the capacity to change their environment unlike the animal characters of fable.<sup>66</sup> This ability for the genre to attract a dual audience is of utmost importance for the following discussion. As is argued, the Aesopic genre of animal fable and the anonymous *Life of Aesop* provide a useful framework in which to view the satirical works of Lucian, as the dual, *hybrid* audience is used to similar effect.

In examining the function of hybridity in the context of the non-elite, it is useful to return to Canclini's discussion of folklore. The role of folklore, he argues, is to act as a bridge between the elite and the popular, allowing for the popular to no longer be excluded from elite knowledge on the basis of social restrictions. He states that

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<sup>64</sup> J. Winkler, *Auctor and Actor: A Narratological Reading of Apuleius' Golden Ass* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 282.

<sup>65</sup> E. Clayton, 'Aesop, Aristotle and Animals: The Role of Fables in Human Life' *Humanitas* 21:2 (2008): 182-3.

<sup>66</sup> E. Clayton, 'Aesop, Aristotle and Animals' 195.

“knowledge of the popular world is no longer required only to form modern integrated nations, *but also to free the oppressed and resolve the struggle between classes*.”<sup>67</sup> Through folklore, the two realms of the elite and the non-elite converge, melding the culture of the populace with that of the higher classes. Lucian engages with the era of the Golden Age and the fable tradition, in order to present a similar convergence of elite and non-elite culture. In his guise as satirist, Lucian utilises a combination of low and high culture in a manner like that of the Aesopic tradition, merging the features of the fable and satire into an informed critique of contemporary philosophy. Kurke states of the *Life of Aesop*, that it “appropriates and reuses traditional tales about Aesop’s distinctive discursive weapons and his critique of *sophia* from below for his own purposes of playful parody of the institutions of education - academic philosophy and rhetoric.”<sup>68</sup> It is this characteristic of the Aesopic tradition surrounding both the fable and the *Life* that is the focus for the following discussion, due to the way in which Lucian harnesses such characteristics of the Aesopic tradition for similar ends. By embracing the dual function of the fable, Lucian uses the dichotomy of the elite and non-elite to suggest a desire for a true sage not unlike Aesop himself. Lucian’s dialogues become more than a hybrid between the dialogue and comedy, but also act as a narrative that critiques hybrid social order. Lucian uses the animal fable to reflect it back upon the society managed by the class of pseudo-intellectuals.

It is necessary to outline what is meant by the ‘Aesopic tradition’ in order to subsequently identify similar themes in Lucian’s work. Crucial to this discussion is Kurke’s *Aesopic Conversations*, which primarily aims to identify the function and symbolism of the figure of Aesop throughout antiquity, and the effect of such a figure upon the formulation of Greek prose. Kurke states that Aesop occupies a position between a number of binary oppositions: “the lowly and common versus the wealth of ranked valuables (gold, silver, ivory); animals versus human wisdom; tales told by females versus authoritative male speech genres; and traditions that belong to childhood...versus grown-up poetry and philosophy.”<sup>69</sup> It is this dichotomy between the elite and non-elite culture that shapes the composition of the following argument,

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<sup>67</sup> N. G. Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*, 148. Emphasis added.

<sup>68</sup> L. Kurke, *Aesopic Conversations: Popular Tradition, Cultural Dialogue, and the Invention of Greek Prose*, Leslie Kurke, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011) 42.

<sup>69</sup> L. Kurke, *Aesopic Conversations*, 1-2.

for as will be shown, Lucian engages with these aspects of the Aesopic tradition, himself bridging the divide between elite pretensions of wisdom and the veracity of lower-class intellect through the medium of satire.

## The Fable

First, it is necessary to outline the perception and role of the fable more broadly.<sup>70</sup> In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, the fable is treated as a rhetorical tool, as one of two means of conducting reasoning (Arist. *Rhet.* 1393a23-1394a18).<sup>71</sup> Holzberg places Aristotle's assessment at the "first stage in the development of this narrative form,"<sup>72</sup> wherein it evolves to become solely "an exemplum within a given literary context."<sup>73</sup> Similarly, Aelius Theon defines the fable (μῦθος) as a "λόγος ψευδῆς εἰκονίζων ἀλήθειαν" (Theon. 2.72). Adrados highlights that even prior to the classical era, the fable was an "exemplum that the poet directs at somebody to offer an illusion or illustration of reality or to suggest a form of behavior to them, always from a critical perspective."<sup>74</sup> These definitions of the fable identify some of its key features. The fable is used as a literary tool within a broader discourse, allowing both for its transmission throughout antiquity, and as a means for an author to present critique in a less overt manner. This prevalence of the fable in antiquity also facilitates the use of the fable in literary works without even a mention of Aesop himself<sup>75</sup> – as will be shown, by the Imperial period Aesop and the associated fables are arguably so engrained in the culture that an overt reference to Aesop becomes wholly unnecessary.

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<sup>70</sup> Due to space constraints, a comprehensive assessment of fable throughout antiquity is not possible here. However, for further reading see G-J. Van Dijk, *Ainai, Mythoi, Logoi: Fables in Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic Greek Literature – With a Study of the Theory and Terminology of the Genre* (Brill: 1997) Leiden; N. Holzberg, C. Jackson Holzberg (tr.) *The Ancient Fable* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); M. Nøjgaard, *La Fable Antique* (Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busck, 1964); F.R. Adrados, *History of the Greco-Latin Fable* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); T. Karadagli, *Fabel und Ainos* (Meisenheim: Anton Hain 1981) Meisenheim.

<sup>71</sup> F. R. Adrados, L.A. Ray (tr.) and G-J. van Dijk (ed.) *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable Volume One: Introduction and From the Origins to the Hellenistic Age* (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 368.

<sup>72</sup> See too, the work of Mueli, who argues that the initial conception of a given fable derives from an external need to mark an occasion, in this case, through the construction of the αἶνος (K. Mueli, *Herkunft und Wesen der Fabel* (Basel: Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Volkskunde: 1975) 743).

<sup>73</sup> N. Holzberg and C. Jackson-Holzberg (tr.), *The Ancient Fable: An Introduction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002) 12.

<sup>74</sup> F.R. Adrados, *History of the Graeco Latin Fable I*, 368.

<sup>75</sup> Such an omission of Aesop in retellings of the fables is particularly evident in Aelian's *NA*.

As the length of Van Dijk's *Ainoi, Mythoi, Logoi*<sup>76</sup> may suggest, defining the fable is no straightforward task, and thus what follows by no means claims to be comprehensive. Rather, the focus is restricted to select core features of the fable, with particular attention to its role within literary works. By outlining the characteristics of the fable, it is possible to identify such features in the works of Lucian, namely the use of animal characters, golden age idealism and an exploration of the tension between elite and non-elite audiences, from which Lucian is able to profess truths disguised as overt fiction. Consequently, it may be argued that Lucian's dialogues, in both their intent and construction, embody the qualities of the Aesopic tradition, and thus act as a series of discourses that act as a bridge between disparate cultures and spheres.

### **The Fable and the Golden Age**

In order to assess the significance of the fable to the works of Lucian, it is useful to provide a summary of the tradition so as to observe the above traits in practice. The fable customarily situates itself in the time of the Golden Age. In the time of the mythical Greek Golden Age, humans, animals and gods are said to have been able to speak a common language. Babrius, prefacing his collection of versified fables, explains that in this Golden Age, "the other animals used to possess articulate speech and understood words just like we employ with each other" (Babr. 1). Babrius' depiction of the Golden Age does, to a certain extent, aim to justify the presence of speaking animals in the fables that follow,<sup>77</sup> however the notion of the mythic past being filled with garrulous animals is not unique to the second-century AD fabulist. The Platonic dialogue *The Statesman* already includes speaking animals in the Golden Age, as the Stranger states to a young Socrates that the "foster children" of Kronos had "the ability to converse not only with human beings but also with beasts" (Pl. *Plt.* 272b).<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> G-J. Van Dijk, *Ainoi, Mythoi, Logoi* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

<sup>77</sup> D. Gera, *Ancient Greek Ideas on Speech, Language and Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 19.

<sup>78</sup> Plato, *Statesman, Philebus, Ion*, translated by H.N. Fowler and W.R.M. Lamb, Loeb Classical Library 164 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925) 61. Xenophon likewise makes mention of freely-speaking animals during the golden age in his *Memorabilia* (X. *Mem.* 2. 7.13).

However the capacity for animal speech is subsequently removed in the present age, relegating the fable to the time of the mythical golden age. The expulsion of animal speech is similarly attested throughout the literary record. Philo speaks of the utopian period when all animals spoke a universal language, and concurs with Plato that such an existence was profitable for each species. The downfall of this communal existence, according to Philo, comes as the result of animal arrogance; in desiring immortality on the basis of their perceived superiority, their common language was divided between species. (Philo *De Confusione Linguarum* 7-8) While this anecdote is contained in the context of the ‘Tower of Babel’ story so as to underpin the specifically *human* differences in language, it is a curious contrast to another major account. Gera observes the difference between accounts of the communicative and communal Golden Age in reference to a Callimachean fragment. While Philo retains the animal capacity for a *separate* language, Callimachus removes animals’ capacity for language altogether. (Call. *Iamb* 2) The animals’ desire for immortality likewise results in their language being transferred to the race of man, but, “the animals’ loss of speech leads to a linguistic break between men and animals, rather than among the animals themselves.”<sup>79</sup>

The Greek Golden Age, according to the above literary accounts, had as one of its primary features the possession by animals of a form of language, and in some versions this language was even shared by humans. It is in this sense, therefore, that the hybrid may be identified as a core aspect of the Aesopic fable. While the animal endowed with speech acts a means to evoke the mythical Golden Age, the speaking animal is also inherently a human-animal hybrid. This feature, as is discussed, is significant for the identification of hybridity in the works of Lucian, namely through the means by which animal and human reason is explored. As is discussed in Chapter 3, these concerns with animal reason and hybridity come to the forefront; Lucian presents the speaking animal of fable as an occupant of both the elite and non-elite sphere.

### *Hesiod and Callimachus*

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<sup>79</sup> D. Gera, *Ancient Greek Ideas on Speech, Language and Civilization*, 31-32. See too T. Hawkins, ‘Eloquent Alogia: Animal Narrators in Ancient Greek Literature’ *Humanities* 6(2): 37 (2017):4-5.



The presence of animal speech in the fable tradition (and its associated difficulties) is illustrated through two of the more well-known excerpts concerning fable from authors in antiquity, those of Hesiod and Callimachus. Hesiod's telling of the Hawk and the Nightingale fable in his *Work and Days* has earned him the mantle of the first known Greek fabulist.<sup>80</sup> Given the wealth of scholarship on Hesiod's treatment of the fable, the following discussion is limited to the political and social implications of the fable, primarily its relationship to the Aesopic tradition succeeding it.<sup>81</sup> In Hesiod's retelling of the 'Hawk and the Nightingale' (*OP.* 202-212), the characteristic portrayal of animal speech is largely significant for its relationship to power struggles between the elite and non-elite members of society. The speech of the nightingale, protesting against being taken by the hawk, is proven to be entirely ineffectual, showing the superiority of power that the hawk holds over the nightingale. As Steiner states, "a hostile encounter between two birds not only configures a contrast between two ethical systems but also between the two styles and genres of poetry that articulate those values," directly proposing that power and speech are intrinsically linked.<sup>82</sup> Through an engagement with the qualities of the two animals, the power struggle in the fable between a weak and strong party presents itself explicitly, and implies that the inferior party is in essence ineffectual largely due to its deprivation of speech.

However there also exists the suggestion of reversal between the two dichotomous roles; while the nightingale is not shown victorious in the fable itself, the narrating voice grants triumph to the nightingale by relating a story of Dike (justice) having revenge over corrupt kings, interpreted as representative of the hawk in the fable prior.<sup>83</sup> The fable of Hesiod underpins the primary tropes of the animal fable – animal

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<sup>80</sup> While Hesiod is perhaps rightfully heralded as the first *direct* written introduction of the fable to Ancient Greek audiences, it is evident, albeit indirectly, that the fable exists within the Homeric epics (see G-J. Van Dijk, *Ainai, Mythoi, Logoi*, 124-126; S. Forsdyke, *Slaves Tell Tales and Other Episodes in the Politics of Popular Culture in Ancient Greece*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012) 69 and R. Scodel, 'Callimachus and Fable' in B. Acosta-Hughes, L. Lehnus and S. Stephens, *Brill's Companion to Callimachus* (Leiden: Brill, 2011) Leiden, 369).

<sup>81</sup> For fuller discussions of the Hesiodic fable, see D. Steiner, 'Fables and Frames: The Poetics and Politics of Animal Fables in Hesiod, Archilochus and the *Aesopica*,' *Arethusa* 45 (2012): 1-41; D. Steiner, 'Feathers Flying: Avian Poetics in Hesiod, Pindar and Callimachus' *The American Journal of Philology* 128:2 (2007): 177-108; R. Hunter, *Hesiodic Voices: Studies in the Ancient Reception of Hesiod's Works and Days* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014) 239-256; G-J. Van Dijk, *Ainai, Mythoi, Logoi*, 127-134.

<sup>82</sup> D. Steiner, 'Feathers Flying,' 188.

<sup>83</sup> D. Steiner, 'Fables and Frames,' 10. In addition to Hesiod, as Aelius Theon states (*Theon Prog.* 73.16-18), Archilochus is also counted among those authors who preceded Aesop in the composition of fable. The Archilochean fable of the eagle and the fox, argues Steiner, follows the same format as Hesiod in terms of presenting a battle between weak and strong wherein the weaker party proves victorious (D. Steiner, 'Fables and Frames,' 14).

speech, reversal of power struggles and framing the truth within a fictional narrative, reflecting a broader commentary on social power dynamics. As is evidenced in the following discussion, Lucian engages with the fable to comment on the contemporary tensions between the elite and the popular classes, and their engagement with philosophical discussion.

The ancient animal fable is also employed in the fragments of Callimachus, as evidenced above in his aetiological explanation for animals' loss of speech following the time of the Golden Age. The Callimachean composition of fable embraces many of the themes found in Hesiod: animal speech, role reversal and power struggle. However as Acosta-Hughes and Scodel argue, the *Iambi* in particular reflect a concern with *literary* power struggles.<sup>84</sup> In *Iamb* 2, it is explained that the reason for animals' lack of speech is their arrogance, with a fox and a swan approaching Zeus with complaints. The poem utilises this tale as an explanation for the loquacious nature of humans themselves, as rather than simply removing the voices of the animals, these voices were passed onto humans (*Iamb* 2.15-17).

However, the significance of speech is also evident in *Iamb* 4, the other of Callimachus' fable pieces, through a similar presentation of the appropriateness of speech.<sup>85</sup> *Iamb* 4 relates the argument between the laurel and the olive over which ought to be more highly praised. After some back and forth<sup>86</sup> between the aggressors, the olive maintains that it is superior, due to having overheard a conversation between two birds. The birds are said<sup>87</sup> to have praised the olive for its superiority in origin, divine protection and the usefulness of its fruit – all of which send the laurel into a fuming rage. However before she may retort, the bramble interjects, suggesting that they cease their argument, inciting the final extant<sup>88</sup> argument of the poem, only to conclude before

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<sup>84</sup> B. Acosta-Hughes and R. Scodel, 'Aesop *Poeta*: Aesop and the Fable in Callimachus' *Iambi*' in *Callimachus Two: Hellenistica Groningana Groningen Workshops on Hellenistic Poetry* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004) Leuven; D. Steiner, 'Feathers Flying,' 177-108. See too D. Steiner, 'Framing the Fox: Callimachus' Second "Iamb" and its Predecessors' *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 130 (2010): 97-107.

<sup>85</sup> B. Acosta-Hughes and R. Scodel, 'Aesop *Poeta*' 11.

<sup>86</sup> For detailed analyses of the *Iamb*, see Kerkhecker (A. Kerkhecker, *Callimachus' Book of Iambi* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999) 83-122), and Acosta-Hughes (B. Acosta-Hughes, *Polyeideia: The Iambi of Callimachus and the Archaic Iambic Tradition*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) 152-204, esp. 190ff.

<sup>87</sup> Kerkhecker notes that it is likely that the olive is making the anecdote up, but its role within the poem is not affected by its fictitious nature (A. Kerkhecker, *Callimachus' Book of Iambi*, 101-2).

<sup>88</sup> D.L. Clayman, 'Callimachus' Fourth Iamb' *The Classical Journal* 74:2 (1978): 142-148.

its proper end.<sup>89</sup> As Dawson suggests, the laurel may have rebuked the bramble for daring to intrude upon their conversation, considering the bramble to be an inferior party – a Callimachean commentary upon inferior forms of literary composition making inappropriate intrusions on elite literature.<sup>90</sup> As Acosta-Hughes and Scodel argue, the bramble represents a transgression of speech, yet it is significant that the olive utilises the crow to present its argument. The crow comes to represent the main proponents of critiquing the literature of the elite,<sup>91</sup> creating something of an imbalance between the interlocutors on account of the elite nature of Callimachus' work. The arrogance of the laurel's superiority reflects an inferiority of style – despite pretensions of superiority, the laurel is ultimately 'defeated' by bastions of low, non-elite culture, such as fable (through the anecdote of the crows) and the lowly bramble.<sup>92</sup>

These two early uses of fable in the 'high' literary context, are useful for understanding Lucian's particular use of fable in the dialogues. In both Hesiod and Callimachus, it is possible to see how this feature of animal speech creates a dichotomy between the types of literature that would usually dismiss the genre of the fable and the very nature of the fable itself, as it allows (not unlike the interjection of the bramble) the presence of an additional voice. As will be argued, Lucian's dialogues similarly utilise these characteristics of the fable tradition in order to critique contemporary philosophy. His characters engage with features of this Golden Age ideal, and evoke the world of the fable through animal speech and Aesopic allusion. In doing so, Lucian bridges the gap between elite and non-elite culture, by utilising the culture of the fable as a familiar, literary motif that allows his philosophical critique to engage with a broad audience.

### *Aristophanes*

Prior to turning to the use of the fable during the Roman empire, it is important to comment upon the role of fable in ancient comedy, in particular that of Aristophanes. Given the wealth of scholarship on the Aristophanic fable, the fables are not discussed

<sup>89</sup> A. Kerkhecker, *Callimachus' Book of Iambi*, 110-11.

<sup>90</sup> C. M. Dawson, 'The Iambi of Callimachus: A Hellenistic Poet's Experimental Laboratory' *Yale Classical Studies* 11 (1950): 51. Kerkhecker expands upon this suggestion in relation to the association of the olive as being Callimachus himself, concluding that the poem is less about poetic superiority than it is about the nature of quarrelling (A. Kerkhecker, *Callimachus' Book of Iambi*, 111-115).

<sup>91</sup> B. Acosta-Hughes and R. Scodel, 'Aesop *Poeta*: Aesop and the Fable in Callimachus' *Iambi*' 11.

<sup>92</sup> B. Acosta-Hughes and R. Scodel, 'Aesop *Poeta*: Aesop and the Fable in Callimachus' *Iambi*' 12.

in full here.<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, Aristophanes' use of the fable throughout his comedies are worth considering, due to the frequency with which Lucian appears directly to reference the Aristophanic fable in his own dialogues. Given the satirical nature of Lucian's works, there are a number of parallels to be drawn between Aristophanes' use of fable and Lucian's. While such parallels are evident through overt references to Aristophanic treatments of fable in Lucian (*Peace* 127-134),<sup>94</sup> there are a number of stylistic similarities to be identified. Importantly, the tension between the elite and non-elite as evidenced in Aristophanes' use of fable is directly related to Aristophanes' position as a composer of comedies.<sup>95</sup> As Pertsinidis has noted, such a tension continues to be reflected in modern scholarship on Aristophanes, and thus due caution should be exercised in considering the fable in this context as 'low culture'.<sup>96</sup>

One of the most significant uses of Aesop by Aristophanes presents itself in the *Wasps*, where the fable appears as a frequent source of tension between the characters Bdelykleon and Philokleon. Rothwell states it is possible to see a divide between the "sub-literary" and "high literature",<sup>97</sup> yet such a tension should be viewed in the context of fable as an embedded form of rhetorical argument. This use of fable, as evidenced in Hesiod's telling of the Hawk and the Nightingale, allows for this tension to be reflected through the fictional medium. Of particular significance is Aristophanes' use of the Eagle and the Dung Beetle fable. Pertsinidis discusses the presence of fable in the *Wasps*, and notes that the use of fable in discussion between the son and his father comes to reflect concerns about appearances; Philokleon, in dressing himself up in appropriate attire to attend a symposium considers himself a weasel dressed as food and alludes to a fable that reflects his position (Perry 303). There is initially the sense here that indeed, the fable belongs to the lower classes of society, as Bdelykleon reproaches his father, and states that he should not be telling such stories at the upper-class symposium (*Vesp.* 1180). This is followed by a recommendation by Bdelykleon to use fable as a means to get out of a quarrel (*Vesp.* 1260), for the matter at hand

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<sup>93</sup> For discussions of Aristophanes' use of fable, see S. Pertsinidis, 'The Fabulist Aristophanes,' *Fabula* 50 (2009): 208-226; K. S. Rothwell Jr., 'Aristophanes' "Wasps" and the Sociopolitics of Aesop's Fables' *The Classical Journal* 90:3 (1995): 233; G.J. van Dijk, *Ainoi, Mythoi, Logoi*, 188ff.

<sup>94</sup> E. Bowie, 'The Ups and Downs of Aristophanic Travel' in *Aristophanes in Performance, 421 BC – AD 2007: Peace, Birds and Frogs*, edited by E. Hall and A. Wrigley. (London: Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing, 2007) 34ff, esp 36.

<sup>95</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between the genres of fable and comedy, see F.R. Adrados, *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable*, 216ff.

<sup>96</sup> S. Pertsinidis, 'The Fabulist Aristophanes,' 208-226.

<sup>97</sup> K. S. Rothwell Jr., 'Aristophanes' "Wasps" and the Sociopolitics of Aesop's Fables' 233.

becomes a joke. In this brief interlude into the world of fable, the fable is considered to be a literary form that belongs to the lower classes. As Pertsinidis notes, such an assessment is complicated by the fact that Bdelykleon claims that Philokleon will learn the appropriate fables to tell at a symposium *at the symposium*, suggesting that the fable is a genre appropriate to all classes.<sup>98</sup> What is more, it is revealed that the lower class nature of Philokleon, as determined by his dress, is in fact not indicative of his social status at all. He is shown to have wealth, but chooses not to act in the same manner as his son, choosing not to parade his wealth through appearance, and shows little concern with his reputation. The seemingly lower-class Philokleon is in fact cast as the ideal Cynic, and this is in the context of the fable genre becomes an important consideration.<sup>99</sup> The relationship of Cynicism to the fable encourages a reflection upon Lucian's own relationship to the fable.<sup>100</sup> It is possible to see the means by which Lucian too engages with the 'Aristophanic' fable. There exists a similar reflection upon the tension present in reciting fable; as Adrados notes, the classical era relied entirely upon the recitation of fable in the oral and sympotic setting, with no strict collection of fable being produced during this time.<sup>101</sup> It is possible to see the impetus of addressing a broad audience emerging, with the need to simultaneously reflect upon popular tradition, although in an arguably elite environment. In what follows, it is possible to see this emerging too in Lucian, as the intellectual satirist comes to occupy both the elite and non-elite space, precisely by engaging with the malleable genre of fable.

The fable, in the context of the *Wasps*, undergoes a number of different incarnations, and exemplifies the fluidity of the genre within the context of a comedy largely concerned with the divide between the upper and the lower class, and

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<sup>98</sup> S. Pertsinidis, 'The Fabulist Aristophanes,' 220. Kurke also comments on the use of fable in the sympotic setting, citing the fable-like nature of Alcibiades' speech in Plato's *Symposium*, with the fable in this context providing an example of the *correct* manner of utilising fable in the symposium (L. Kurke, 'Plato, Aesop and the Beginnings of Mimetic Prose' *Representations* 94:1 (2006): 31).

<sup>99</sup> S. Pertsinidis, 'The Fabulist Aristophanes,' 217.

<sup>100</sup> Cynicism, as has been shown in the introduction to this dissertation and will be evaluated further in the context of the figure of Aesop himself, is frequently connected with the fable genre. Zafiropoulos argues against the suggestions of Adrados, states that there is little to indicate a definitive association of Cynicism to the fable. While such a position should not be ignored, it is nevertheless an important consideration in any assessment of the fable, given the pervasive nature of Cynicism, especially during the period of the second century AD. As Zafiropoulos outlines, Adrados identifies a number of core Cynic themes that present themselves in the fable genre: "disapproval of wealth, abuse of power, false beauty, hedonism; condemnation of ingratitude, selfishness and hypocrisy; criticism of custom, boastfulness, imprudence" (Zafiropoulos, 35). As will be shown below, it is clear that these aspects of the doctrine are clear in both the Aesopic tradition, and significantly, are engaged with throughout the Lucianic corpus (C.A Zafiropoulos, *Ethics in Aesop's Fables: The Augustana Collection* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

<sup>101</sup> F. R. Adrados, *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable*, 378-9.

encouraging the perception that such a divide stretches between generations. This is not to say that the fable reflects lower class concerns, but rather that it acts as a useful tool for the playwright to engage with a dual audience, by making the fable-teller a likeable character (throughout his extant plays) and one who challenges, in the case of the *Wasps*, the society that values the appearance of wealth and virtue over the actualised embodiment of it. The fable, as utilised in Aristophanes' plays acts as a means to create an "accord between the character and the outlook of the fable teller/hero and the playwright himself."<sup>102</sup> It is this feature of the Aristophanic fable that is crucial for understanding the use of fable in Lucian, as it is possible to understand the fable, in this Aristophanic context, as being manipulated and utilised by Lucian. As Adrados states, the *Wasps* exemplifies the important role of the symposium for the transmission of fable; the fable exists in a "potential state,"<sup>103</sup> neither collated nor collected, and entirely reliant upon oral transmission. The fable too, is a tool that becomes inextricable from the persona of Aesop, and thus associations of wit and cleverness similarly become attached to the fable genre. Lucian's engagement with the animal fable elicits a response similar to that of Aristophanes, as I will argue more fully below. The fable, as a 'lower class' form of literature is utilised to critique elite themes in the context of the satirical performance space.

As will be argued, speech and power dynamics become crucial in Lucian's use of the fable genre. Lucian not only attributes speech to non-human interlocutors, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, but he also uses such speech to comment upon the *perception* of intellect that is derived from the human capacity for speech. Literary speech, when utilised in the correct manner and in the correct environment, has been shown to offer writers, especially of the early Roman Empire, a means of encouraging a particular perception of their works. The adoption of fable, as will be argued, invites readers to interpret Lucian's texts as both rhetorical virtuoso-pieces and popular commentary. The long-standing role of fable in rhetoric and as social commentary acts as a cue to read with an eye to both rhetoric and politics. In this context, Lucian's use of fable throughout his works becomes a rhetorical tool in and of itself, addressing his hybridised audience through the hybridised literary form.

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<sup>102</sup> S. Pertsinidis, 'The Fabulist Aristophanes', 224.

<sup>103</sup> F.R. Adrados, *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable* 378.

## The *Life* of Aesop

Prior to turning to fables of the Imperial era, it is necessary to assess the development of the fable tradition in the context of the *Life of Aesop*, as much of the reception of fable relies upon an understanding of the fabulist. The biographical tradition of Aesop exists well before the composition of the *Life*; Herodotus relates that he was a slave in Samos and that he died in Delphi (2.123-5), and the circumstances surrounding his demise in Delphi can be found in Aristophanes' *Wasps* (1446-1448). As Miles and Demoen note, the tradition surrounding the fabulist is, by the Imperial era, well established and well known.<sup>104</sup> It is this biographical tradition, be it fictional or otherwise, that is significant for the following discussion. Aesop, as he is presented in the anonymous *Life*, is a character who represents the popular classes, but is nevertheless shown as a highly intelligent individual. This feature of the Aesopic tradition and the fable permeates the works of Lucian, positioning his satires in a similar hybrid position to that of Aesop himself.

The *Life of Aesop*, a text dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD,<sup>105</sup> is subject to much conjecture, due to the dearth of information concerning its composition and transmission. As Kurke argues, the extant manuscript is the end product of a long-standing tradition regarding Aesop, and it is through such a tradition that the figure of 'Aesop' comes to be available to the literary world as a "mask or alibi for critique, parody, or cunning resistance by any who felt themselves disempowered in the face of some kind of unjust or inequitable institutional authority."<sup>106</sup> This 'mask' is arguably most apparent in the *Life*, and it is from such an emphasis in the work that Lucian, and other authors of the Imperial era, may adopt and adapt Aesop's anti-authoritarian<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> G. Miles and K. Demoen, 'In Praise of the Fable,' 37.

<sup>105</sup> For a discussion of the manuscript tradition surrounding the *Life of Aesop*, see L. Kurke, *Aesopic Conversations*, 16ff, and the original preface of Perry's *Aesopica* (B.E. Perry, *Aesopica: A series of texts relating to Aesop or ascribed to him or closely connected with the literary tradition that bears his name*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1952). It should be noted that in the analysis that follows, I have chosen to follow the text of the G recension (in opposition to the W recension).

<sup>106</sup> L. Kurke, *Aesopic Conversations*, 12.

<sup>107</sup> While Aesop's relationship to Apollo is not discussed here, it is clear that Aesop's stance towards the divinity acts as a final transgression of the fabulist against apparent authorities. As Finkelpearl discusses, it is not merely his dismissal of Apollo's authority that leads to his death, but also the act of transgressing the correct boundaries of low and high culture in terms of literary expression (E. Finkelpearl, 'Lucius and Aesop Gain a Voice: Apuleius *Met.* 11.1-2 and *Vita Aesopi* 7' in *The Ancient Novel and Beyond* edited by S. Panayotakis, M. Zimmerman and W. H. Keulen (Leiden: Brill, 2003) 43-47).

stance. In what follows, I will examine the literary significance of the *Life* and its particular role in the works of Lucian. Lucian frames his satires around Aesop and his fables, utilising the speaking animal and candid nature of the figure of Aesop to critique, and render illegitimate, the contemporary philosopher-sophists.

The biography primarily portrays the tense relationship between Aesop, and his philosopher-master Xanthos. The composition of the life reveals that the figure of Aesop undergoes a process of transmission not dissimilar to that of the fables themselves, as there exists a long-standing tradition surrounding the fabulist. As Adrados summarises, Aesop is well-known not only as the teller of fables, but also as the Oriental sage “merged into the Thracian or Phrygian Aesop, the slave and the scholar, the narrator of fables, the solver of enigmas, protected by Apollo, yet unjustly killed” in Delphi.<sup>108</sup> The character of Aesop, therefore, is arguably embedded in the traditional narrative as something of a hybrid character in and of himself; he is both the slave and the scholar, and the widespread transmission of the fables comes to reflect this. In the discussion that follows, it will be shown how the character of Aesop in the *Life* is constructed in such a way as to continue bridging the divide between the symbolically low culture of the slave, and the elite culture of philosophical inquiry through the fable genre. Xanthos, in the memorable first third of the *Life*,<sup>109</sup> is intellectually belittled by his slave, who not only reveals himself to be a creature of rational thought, but also one who expresses a knowledge of philosophical truths. In addition to the fable genre itself, Lucian also adopts this particular feature of the Aesopic ethos, as I shall argue more fully below. The characters of Lucian’s satires come to represent this hybridity of form and function in a similar manner to Aesop himself, acting as figures who are able to bridge the divide between low and high

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<sup>108</sup> F.R. Adrados, *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable I*, 647. The association of Aesop with Delphi, while it is a significant aspect of the Aesopic tradition, is not treated in the following discussion, as the focus is upon the earlier sections of the life and Aesop’s interaction with philosophical discourse. For extensive discussions of Aesop’s experience and death in Delphi, see A. Wiechers, *Aesop in Delphi*; L. Kurke, “Aesop and the Contestation of Delphic Authority”, in *The Cultures Within Ancient Greek Culture: Contact, Conflict, Collaboration*, edited by C. Dougherty and L. Kurke (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); M. L. West, “The Ascription of Fables to Aesop in Archaic and Classical Greece”, *La Fable* (Vandœuvres–Genève: Fondation Hardt, Entretiens XXX 1984) 105–36.

<sup>109</sup> Holzberg, N. ‘Der Äsop-Roman: Eine strukturanalytische Interpretation’ in *Der Äsop-Roman: Motivgesichichte und Erzählstruktur*, edited by N. Holzberg, with A. Beschorner and S. Merkle, (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1992) 34–75, esp. 47ff.



culture, not only within the literary sphere (by merging the genres of comedy and dialogue), but by adopting Aesopic interpretations of temporal and cultural hybridity.

As Socrates himself illustrates in the *Phaedo* (61b) and *Symposium* (233c-d), there is space for disparate genres to converge. Socrates proposes at the closing of Plato's *Symposium* that one skilled in composing tragedy may also have the knowledge to compose works of comedy, just as he himself proves skilled both in reason and in storytelling when versifying the fables of Aesop while awaiting his execution. Socrates not only embraces the potential for genre to have a hybrid form (and exists himself within the hybrid genre of Platonic dialogue), but becomes himself a link in the transmission of the fable tradition. As duBois asserts, the "philosopher might be a fabulist, even a slave,"<sup>110</sup> and it is in this context that much of the following discussion is framed. This association with philosophy and the fable tradition is not only repeated in the *Life of Aesop*, but also in the works of Lucian. In the *Life of Aesop*, we are offered an image of a slave who, despite his master's best efforts, is able to prove himself as being superior in terms of philosophical prowess, through his own apparently innate mastery over rhetoric and *sophia*. For Lucian, the fable tradition is similarly presented in direct opposition to the present philosophical environment, framing these lower-class themes and genres as uncharacteristically superior to the appearance of *sophia*. Just as Socrates is able to adopt the skills of reason and storytelling, Aesop himself is portrayed as representing reason through storytelling. It is this aspect of the Aesopic tradition that Lucian is able successfully to utilise in his dialogues, presenting the audience with the fable as both a narrative device and philosophical reflection.

### *Aesop the Slave*

The significance of the slave culture background to the figure of Aesop is pivotal for the following discussion. This is not simply due to the characterisation of Aesop himself as a slave, but also the consistent association of the fable themselves with slave culture.<sup>111</sup> The servile background of the genre persists through the characterisation of

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<sup>110</sup> P. duBois, *Slaves and Other Objects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2003) 182.

<sup>111</sup> S. Forsdyke, *Slaves Tell Tales*, esp. 37-89; K. S. Rothwell, 'Aristophanes' "Wasps" and the Sociopolitics of Aesop's Fables,' 233-254; A. Patterson, *Fables of Power: Aesopian Writing and Political History* (Duke University Press: Durham, 2003); L. Kurke, *Aesopic Conversations*, esp. 125-142. See too Perry 545, *Aesop and the Ugly Mistress* for the association of Aesop himself as a slave;

the slave not simply below the master, but as a subhuman figure. Much of the identification of the slave as subhuman derives from antiquity's assessment of reason – in particular, the lack of it that is exhibited in slaves and inhuman objects. One of the more pervasive views upon ancient slavery is found in Aristotle. In discussion the nature of friendship, Aristotle states that there cannot be friendship nor justice between inanimate objects (tools) and those who utilise them, a statement that also stands for the relationship between master and slave. A slave, for Aristotle, is merely a “living tool”, while the tool is an “inanimate slave” (Arist. *EN*. 1161b).<sup>112</sup> The slave, therefore, is characterised as being little more than an animated tool, and corporeally on par with the non-human animal. Such an identification is significant for the characterisation of Aesop in the *Life*, as Aesop as a slave acts in a manner contrary to the Aristotelian definition. Rather than succumb to an existence of silence and subjugation, Aesop exhibits precisely the quality of the slave that had been previously denied: reason.

The *Life* of Aesop opens with an emphasis upon two features of the fabulist: his appearance (unfavourable, including attributes such as a misshapen head and a pot belly) and his lack of capacity for speech. The latter is demonstrated through the re-telling of a short anecdote, wherein Aesop is framed for eating the master's figs, a crime committed by his fellow slaves, but pinned on him precisely due to his inability to speak. Aesop, however, exhibits almost immediately his capacity for reason, proving to the irate master through his ‘resourcefulness’<sup>113</sup> (πολυπειρία, *Vita* G.3) that it was not he who ate the figs, but the other slaves. The anecdote marks the first of many instances in the *Life* where Aesop proves himself to be more than an animated tool, by showing a capacity for intellect in the face of adversity. In the subsequent passage,

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Perry 382, *The Delphians and their Ancestors* for Aesopic accusations of slavery towards the Delphians, related to his eventual death by their hands.

<sup>112</sup> As duBois notes, drawing upon this and a further discussion in the *Eudemian Ethics*, the slave is positioned between the master and the tool – having the animation of the master, but nevertheless lacking his capacity for rational thought (P. duBois, *Slaves and Other Objects*, 129). The perception that slaves are incapable of reason comes to be a means to justify the subjugation of slaves, to actively characterise them as less than human. Such a categorisation becomes even more explicit in Aristotle's *Politics*, wherein the slave is equated with the non-human animal in terms of providing “bodily assistance in satisfying essential needs,” the two similarly justified for such treatment on the basis of lack of rational capacity (Arist. *Pol.* 1254b).

<sup>113</sup> Upon being accused of eating the figs, Aesop forces himself to vomit, revealing that he had in fact not eaten anything. The other slaves, however, when told by the master to similarly vomit, discharged the figs, proving their guilt (G 3).

Aesop's other non-human quality, his lack of speech, is rectified through a visitation of the goddess Isis, who restores his speech as payment for his piety (*Vita* G.5; 7-8).<sup>114</sup>

In this brief introduction, the rise of Aesop from a lowly slave to one who moves above the slave class is foreshadowed. The acquisition of speech, argues Hunter, not only represents the development of the character of Aesop, but also reflects a scientific explanation of the development of speech more broadly. He states that such a "double explanation" encourages the reader to "associate a productive tension within such literature between the naiveté of the characters and the sophistication of the art which describes them."<sup>115</sup> The naïve characters of the *Life* are not figured through the character of Aesop himself, but through his various interlocutors, who, by making assumptions of his intellect prove themselves to be inferior to the mute slave. By the time the narrative reaches the first interaction between Aesop and his soon-to-be master Xanthos, it has already been firmly established<sup>116</sup> that Aesop is a shrewd character, who despite being a slave, consistently trumps his interlocutors.

In portraying this initial rise of Aesop, the *Life* evokes a similar rise of the slave culture, by humanising its participants through an acquisition of both speech and reason. Aesop is no longer the animated, animal-like tool of Aristotle, but in a swift turn of events, becomes a source of fear for his former master. Aesop, now that he speaks, represents a threat to his master Zenas, who immediately takes action to rid himself of the rational slave (*Vita*. 9-11). The threat of Aesop to his master, as the narrative continues, comes to be a valid concern while he is in the possession of Xanthos, and as Hopkins asserts, "Aesop represents all that a master might despise and fear in a slave."<sup>117</sup> This representation of the threat a slave may pose to a master,

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<sup>114</sup> The inclusion of Isis in the *Life* is a feature only of Recension G. For a detailed discussion of Isis and her role in the characterisation of Aesop, see J. J. Winkler, *Auctor and Actor: A Narratological Reading of Apuleius' Golden Ass* (Berkeley: University of California Press: 1985) 276-291.

<sup>115</sup> R. Hunter, 'Isis and the Language of Aesop' in *Pastoral Palimpsests: Essays in the Reception of Theocritus and Virgil*, edited by M. Paschalis (Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 2007) 49-53.

<sup>116</sup> Following his sale by Zenas, Aesop once again proves his intellect over his fellow slaves. Aesop chooses to carry a package on the road to Ephesus that bears the weight better suited to a mule (*Vita* G.18). The fellow slaves, incredulous that the new slave would choose the heaviest of the packages, are soon astonished by Aesop's wit: the package contained the bread that would be eaten over the course of the journey, thus making the burden the lightest of all by the end of the trip (*Vita* G.19). In this anecdote, Aesop both exhibits his capacity to reason beyond instinct (to take up the lighter package from the beginning) and his capacity to exceed the qualities of animals.

<sup>117</sup> K. Hopkins, 'Novel Evidence for Roman Slavery', *Past and Present*: 138 (1993): 14. As Hopkins outlines, the character of Aesop both represents the slave-owner's deepest fears (an intelligent slave with the propensity towards rebellion) and proposes something of a code of conduct for slave owners to follow if they wish to receive 'good service' from their slave. This latter message, that is largely directed towards elite audiences, is discussed below (K. Hopkins, 'Novel Evidence for Roman Slavery,' 22-4).

presented in a fictional biography of the famously lower-class fabulist, underpins Hunter's 'productive tension'; the text presents the common fable trope of slave-master role reversal,<sup>118</sup> actualised not through animal allegory, but through the medium of both biography and *human* agents.

However it is through Aesop's interactions with Xanthos that the fabulist's intellect is evidenced not through his overt wit, but through what Hopkins terms "wilful misunderstanding."<sup>119</sup> These instances reveal the necessity of ensuring a mutually beneficial relationship between master and slave, and warn against treating the slave as a creature without rational thought. Aesop's wilful misunderstanding first manifests itself when he is asked by Xanthos to bring an oil flask to him at the baths. In response to Xanthos requesting Aesop not do anything "more or less than you are told," Aesop brings only the flask, but does not fill it with oil. Unsurprisingly, Aesop is reproached for his actions, yet with childlike innocence, Aesop claims he was simply doing exactly as he was told (*Vita*. G.38). This interaction incites a reflection upon the treatment of slaves more broadly, and can be understood as a "mismanagement" of the relationship between master and slave.<sup>120</sup> The slave, in being treated as a being without reason and rationality, teaches his master a lesson by proving an absence of common sense. Such an action is similarly in force in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*; as Lucius' transformation into the donkey (and his subsequent treatment as a donkey) incites an internal dilemma for the human-minded creature. Bradley states that the actual condition of slaves is reflected through the torment of Lucius, as their "freedom to act on the impulse of intelligence and emotion was threatened with near extinction by submission to a superior force."<sup>121</sup> The treatment of Aesop by his master Xanthos threatens his intellect,

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<sup>118</sup> Such role reversal is of course not unique to the *Life*, but is a well established tradition in the comedy genre. Aristophanic comedy in particular utilises such a theme, as explicitly satirised in the *Frogs*, (Ar. Ra. 496ff.) and such a trope continues throughout Roman era comedy. For detailed discussions on this fluid dichotomy in the context of comedy, see K. McCarthy, *Slaves, Masters and the Art of Authority in Plautine Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); P. W. Harsh, 'The Intriguing Slave in Greek Comedy,' *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 86 (1955): 135-142. See too Goins on the role of Aristophanic comedy on the composition of the *Life* (S. E. Goins, 'The Influence of Old Comedy on the *Vita Aesopi*,' *The Classical World* 83 :1 (1989): 38-30).

<sup>119</sup> K. Hopkins, 'Novel Evidence for Roman Slavery', 18.

<sup>120</sup> S. Forsdyke, *Slaves Tell Tales*, 76-77.

<sup>121</sup> K. Bradley, 'Animalizing the Slave: The Truth of Fiction,' *The Journal of Roman Studies* 90 (2000): 120.

and capacity for rational thought; as a lesson in humanity, Aesop wilfully responds by acting in the manner in which he is treated.

By highlighting questions of slave intellect as reflected in the *Life*, it is possible to see such questions similarly treated in the works of Lucian. Most significantly, it is possible to identify such a theme in his *Dream, or Gallus*, precisely on account of the concerns raised regarding intellect and speech. In Chapter Three, it will be shown that the character of the rooster, a reincarnation of the philosopher Pythagoras, demonstrates the difficulties associated with denying animals the capacity for speech. The rooster is able to regain the capacity for human speech, and it is only through his interlocutor that Micyllus is able to find wisdom. Rather than merely desiring wealth, Pythagoras teaches him that the life in poverty is not only a far more pleasant experience, but is more admirable. The *Life* thus aids in positioning Lucian's works in the context of the fable genre. The dialogue, *Gallus*, not only positions itself in the era of the fable through the existence of animal speech, but it simultaneously engages with the Aesopic concerns of considering appearance a reflection of intellectual capacity. The Rooster, much like Aesop himself, is proven to be more intelligent than the human interlocutor, and as will be shown, both human characters (Micyllus and Xanthos) come to learn true philosophy from their apparently speechless companion. As the narrative continues, it is revealed that Aesop surpasses his master in philosophic and linguistic intellect. Aesop's role as "le vrai sage"<sup>122</sup> is established *through* characteristics of popular knowledge, yet simultaneously through utilising elite conceptions of knowledge as a means to debunk and discredit the philosophical professions of false wisdom, prevalent among the upper classes of society.

Through this brief overview of the text, it is clear that Aesop in the *Life* represents precisely the hybridity of Adrados' 'slave and scholar,' and while the *Life* indeed serves to preserve other archaic aspects of the Aesopic tradition<sup>123</sup> it is this

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<sup>122</sup> S. Jedrkiewicz, 'Quelques traits sceptiques dans l'image populaire du philosophe au début de notre ère' *Platon* 46 (1994) : 129-134.

<sup>123</sup> Of particular prominence is the tradition surrounding Aesop and Delphi. As noted above, this tale presents itself in the fables themselves (Perry 382), however it can also be evidenced in older traditions. For detailed discussions of Delphi and its relationship to Aesop, see Wiechers (A. Wiechers, *Aesop in Delphi*, Meisenheim: Anton Hain Verlag, 1961). Additionally, it is worth noting the similarities between the Aesopic tradition and the tradition surrounding the figure of Ahikar, to the extent that aspects of the *Life* are modelled directly on the *Life of Ahikar* (F.R. Adrados, 'The "Life of Aesop" and the Origins of Novel in Antiquity' *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica*, New Series 1 (1979): 98ff.; F. Lissarrague, 'Aesop, Between Man and Beast: Ancient Portraits and Illustrations', in *Not the Classical Ideal: Athens and the Construction of the Other in Greek Art*, edited by B. Cohen (Leiden: Brill, 2000, 113).

dichotomy between popular and elite culture that is the focus for the following discussion. Here, it is possible to identify hybridity of both form and function, as Aesop and Lucian alike use the genre of fable to address concerns to a broad audience. In so doing, Lucian inevitably engages with the imagery of the fable, and its representation of the hybrid animal. In turn, it is possible to identify a further layer to Lucian's dual audience; not only does the satirist construct his dialogues so as to speak to the popular and elite classes, but in addition, these elite classes are ultimately undermined precisely on account of being simultaneously too much of a hybrid, and not hybridised enough.

### **Fables, Aesop and Cynicism**

As alluded to earlier, the capacity of Aesop and the fable to move between high and low literature and culture (and Lucian's adoption of these qualities), must be considered in the context of the Cynic doctrine. Cynicism, in its most base understanding, can be understood as representing the concerns of the popular class, focussing neither on reputation nor amassing material wealth, being more concerned with living in alignment with nature. As Kidd summarises, "the end of life is happiness, which is achieved by living a life of virtue and self-sufficiency in accordance with nature...To the Cynic, happiness depends on being self-sufficient, which is a matter of mental attitude. The road to self-sufficiency was to dissociate oneself actively from any influence, external or internal, which might fetter one's individual freedom."<sup>124</sup> In direct contrast to this, the philosophical mindset that presents itself in the antagonists of both the *Life* and Lucian's dialogues does not focus upon this life in accordance with nature, but instead allows the influence of reputation to overcome them. Given Lucian's own relationship with Cynicism that was outlined in the introduction to this dissertation, it is crucial to expand upon this in the context of Lucian's use of Aesop.

The relationship of Cynicism to the fable and to Aesop is hardly difficult to identify. Adrados' overview of the Cynic elements of the fable is both informative and comprehensive, and thus a large portion of the following discussion expands upon this previous work. Nevertheless, it is important to outline the core aspects of the Cynic

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<sup>124</sup> I. G. Kidd, 'Cynicism' in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Western Philosophy*, edited by J. Rée and J. O. Urmson (London: Routledge, 2005) 82.

fable so as to further this analysis in the context of Lucian. Cynicism and the Aesopic tradition, even prior to Demetrius of Phalerum's collection,<sup>125</sup> are intrinsically entwined. The Cynic ideals of wisdom over aspirations to wealth, emphasis upon the victory of the weak over the powerful and, of course, a stress upon the immutability of nature, are found throughout the fables.<sup>126</sup> Yet Adrados notes that there exists a number of fables that go beyond these basic Cynic themes, encouraging these particular fables to be viewed perhaps as of especial significance to those favourable to the Cynic ideal. Adrados divides such fables into eight<sup>127</sup> main categories, and it is from these clear divisions that an overall image of the Cynic fable may be formed.

The first of these categories, and arguably the most evident, is the theme of nature, as reflected through the animal fable and its associated commentary upon the 'core' characteristics of each animal. The characteristics of the fable genre are wholly representative of the characteristics of the animal in question as evidenced in *nature*, either for an aetiological purpose or, importantly, in the context of proving their excellence in a particular characteristic. This element of Cynicism is arguably the most important for the following discussion, as the notion of proving oneself in a natural environment should be considered as a major aspect of the Lucianic use of fable, as there must always be a clear 'winner.' The agonistic environment that is evident in the fable genre, in the context of its Cynic emphasis upon nature, offers a capacity to reflect upon contemporary *agon* in human nature. The fable's message of encouraging 'victory' for the one who *appears* at first glance to be the inferior party, becomes a core tenet of both the Cynic doctrine and Lucian's engagement with it. As Adrados states of nature in the fable, "friendship is impossible between animals of different natures,"<sup>128</sup> as one's nature is, in essence, unchangeable. Even if a wolf dresses up as a sheep, the true nature of the wolf is ultimately revealed (Perry 451). This theme of the fable is intrinsic to Lucian's work. Such a theme is evident in a number of places throughout Lucian's dialogues, although for the following discussion, the focus is upon the act of

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<sup>125</sup> Demetrius of Phalerum was a Cynic philosopher of the second century BC, attributed with composing an early collection of fables (D.L. 5.5; J. F. Kindstrand, 'Demetrius the Cynic' *Philologus* 124:1 (2016) 83-98).

<sup>126</sup> Adrados notes the presence of Cynic-esque themes in a variety of Archaic and Classic authors, including Archilochus, Theognis, Sophocles and Xenophon. F.R. Adrados, *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable*, 605-606.

<sup>127</sup> While Adrados divides his analysis of the cynic fable into these eight categories, my discussion chooses to focus on a select few of these as the ultimate focus is upon Lucian's interpretation of the Cynic fable. For the full discussion, see F.R. Adrados, *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable*, 604-635.

<sup>128</sup> F.R. Adrados, *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable*, 613.

distinguishing between the philosopher-sophist, and what may be understood as the ‘real,’ or ‘natural’ philosopher.<sup>129</sup> In Chapters 2 and 4, I treat two distinct yet interrelated interpretations of this theme. Chapter 2 outlines the means by which Lucian first portrays the philosopher-sophists as largely unnatural creatures, only to show in Chapter 4, the means by which one may maintain their allegiance with the natural world. In Chapter 4, the character of Menippus is analysed in his role as Icaromenippus, basing his capacity to reach the Heavens precisely on account of the fact that Aesop allowed dung-beetles and camels to do so. Lucian’s engagement with the animal fable has a direct relationship to the philosophy of the Cynics. The animals of the Aesopic fable are uncorrupted, representing the Cynic ideal of living in accordance with nature. Lucian manipulates this theme in order to apply it to the unnatural hybridity of the philosophers, while simultaneously enhancing his own natural hybrid state.

The preoccupation with nature is also largely responsible for the fable’s dismissal of wealth and prestige as admirable qualities, a feature that is strongly Cynic in nature. The fable often warns against the dangers of greed, and Adrados highlights the relationship of wealth to aspirations to, or exploitation of power, which is commonly shown in the context of elite characters being defeated by ‘lower class’ cunning.<sup>130</sup> What’s more, the greedy often have what Adrados deems “vanity of life,” by failing to recognise their own morality. Adrados notes the prominence of this theme throughout the fable, and aligns it to the doctrine of Cynicism – it is only through a recognition and acceptance of one’s mortality that one is able truly to live in a natural state.<sup>131</sup> By valuing the natural elements of Cynicism, the fable also values the ‘low’ and ‘popular’ over the pretensions of elite culture, the most prominent (and in some ways, clichéd) example of this being the oft-told interaction between Diogenes and Alexander the Great (D.L. 6.79). This characteristic of the fable, and of Cynicism, are prevalent throughout the works of Lucian, supporting the notion that Lucian continues the tradition of employing animal fable. In what follows, it is clear that Lucian relates

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<sup>129</sup> This theme of distinguishing between the real and the false appears throughout Lucian’s works. Lucian’s *True Histories* explicitly engages with such a theme, introducing the fantastical work as an entirely false story, as a parody of contemporary literature. Lucian’s *Lexiphanes* and *Ignorant Book Collector* too, comment on the act of appearing to be educated, acting falsely proficient with language, or utilising material objects as ‘proof’ of their education. In the context of philosophical veracity, the figure of Peregrinus also engages with the notion of appearance of truth, with the title character’s true nature similarly being revealed as merely a façade.

<sup>130</sup> F.R. Adrados, *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable*, 615-616.

<sup>131</sup> F.R. Adrados, *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable*, 622-623.



similar concerns to those reflected in the Cynic fable. The *Gallus* dialogue, which is the main focus of discussion for Chapter Three, reflects precisely these related concerns of elite greed and popular intellect, as the money hungry Micyllus is taught, not unlike the audiences of fables before him, the dangers of greed and desiring power. At the core of this dialogue is the figure of Pythagoras, in his guise as a reincarnated rooster, once again presenting the importance and benefit of living and aligning with the natural world. The perhaps ‘lowly’ rooster is shown to be not only capable but superior to his interlocutor in philosophical wisdom; a clear parallel to the figure of Aesop himself. Additionally, Lucian follows through with this message through a concerted reflection upon life after death, having his characters (frequently Menippus, the Cynic), travel to both the heavens and the underworld in order to determine the true existence in death. In both of the Menippean dialogues (*Nekyomanteia* and *Icaromenippus*), the fable, the Aesopic tradition and the Cynic doctrine converge, allowing Lucian to present his satirical critique through this malleable and effective framework.

In what follows, the Aesopic tradition and its relationship to the Cynic doctrine is considered in the context of the Second Sophistic, and the means by which authors during that time similarly used (or in some cases, omitted) the Aesopic tradition from their own works. Having established this, it is possible to underpin the way in which the fable may be utilised as a means to critique contemporary philosophy by engaging the broader associations of Aesop and the Aesopic, and a dual audience between low and high culture. ní Mheallaigh, in her 2014 work *Reading Fiction with Lucian*, discusses the low and high culture of Lucian in the context of his work as a hybrid between comedy and dialogue. She highlights that Lucian’s dialogue *On the Dance* is most evocative of this integration of high and low culture, through the way in which Lucian “elevate[s] the cultural prestige of pantomime...[and] assimilates a low-cultural art form to his own poetics.”<sup>132</sup> She draws upon the argument of Lada-Richards,<sup>133</sup> who states that Lucian’s use of the pantomime as a setting speaks not only of the nature of pantomime as an art form, but of “Lucian’s synoptic, cannibalizing view of culture

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<sup>132</sup> K. ní Mheallaigh, *Reading Fiction with Lucian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) 18.

<sup>133</sup> I. Lada-Richards, *Silent Eloquence: Lucian and Pantomime Dancing* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007) 102.

which assimilated so many contemporary art-forms, both high *and* low (tragedy, comedy, painting, sculpture and dance) to his own.”<sup>134</sup>

It is this assimilation of the high and low that is crucial for the following discussion, as it is argued that the high and low culture in a number of Lucian’s works stems from an engagement with the Aesopic tradition, and arguably becomes emphasised through the philosophical doctrine of Cynicism. In what follows, the fable is shown to present itself throughout Lucian by creating a disguise for his critique of philosophy. Forsdyke notes that “the very fact that popular culture has infiltrated or been appropriated into elite literary texts means that some aspects of the “living” culture of non-elites have survived...the trick is recognising these appropriations and to decode what these images and themes would have signified to non-elite audiences.” In what follows, through a consideration of the fable culture and the *Life of Aesop*, such a decoding of the infiltrations of the popular culture in the elite literary texts is attempted. It is possible to view this thematic use of fable manifest specifically through the animal and the fable in Lucian, reading the use of ‘lower’ literary forms as a means to engage with non-elite audiences. As will be argued, the core features of the fable, being role reversal, animal speech and impossible situations are features that are embraced by Lucian in his satire of contemporary philosophy. He creates an overtly fictional situation in which to position a truth in disguise, facilitating a satire of philosophers, for philosophers and the non-elite classes alike.

### **Aesop and the Fable in the Second Sophistic**

Aelius Theon, in his *Progymnasmata*, states that despite Hesiod, Homer and Archilochus being among the first to use fables, the attribution of the name ‘Aesopic’ derives from Aesop, not for his role as inventor, but for being the first to write them down extensively. Aesop’s role in the composition of fable, he states, is not unlike the use of metre as found in Aristophanes and Alcaeus – they are not credited with its invention, but rather, they gave it worth (*Prog.* 73). There are many literary forms of the fable, he states, and thus it is useful to assess the fable in the context of Second

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<sup>134</sup> K. ní Mheallaigh, *Reading Fiction with Lucian*, 20.

Sophistic authors on account of their allusion to and adaptation of the fable in their rhetorical works. The use of the fable in the Imperial era differs in an important aspect from that of authors preceding it. First, as Holzberg notes, the vast majority of authors from the Imperial era who engaged with the fable genre were members of the elite and intellectuals, and thus the use of fable as a means of rhetorical reasoning becomes forefront.<sup>135</sup> Significantly, as will be shown, the authors of the Imperial era and their use of Aesop and the fable not only enforce the perception of the fable being inextricable from the figure of Aesop, but also portray the Aesopic tradition as a source of wisdom.<sup>136</sup> By viewing the fable in the context of Plutarch, Philostratus, Dio Chrysostom, and Aelian, it is possible to conduct a more thorough analysis of Lucian's use of fable, by assessing the relevant differences and similarities. In doing so, it is possible to identify more effectively the dual audience that Lucian embraces in his satires, for while Lucian represents the intellectual satirist engaged in philosophical critique, his works, through an interaction with fable and Aesop, align with the *Life of Aesop* itself, replicating the "fondness for witty satire and caustic ridicule,"<sup>137</sup> that embodies the high and low literary cultures.

#### *Plutarch*<sup>138</sup>

While the name of Aesop and references to his fables appear frequently throughout Plutarch's *Moralia*,<sup>139</sup> it is the retelling of the *Dinner of the Seven Sages* that is most pertinent to the following discussion. Among the attendees of the dinner is Aesop, who frequently appears to act as a counter-figure to the present intellectuals. As each of the Sages offer a piece of wisdom on how to be an effective ruler, Aesop speaks up as if he were conducting a cross-examination (οἶον ἐλεγκτικῶς), critiquing the Sages by stating that it is inappropriate for them to make complaints about rulers among company. Yet Jedrkiewicz, in his *Il convitato sullo sgabello: Plutarco, Esopo ed i Sette Savi* states

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<sup>135</sup> N. Holzberg, *The Ancient Fable*, 25-26.

<sup>136</sup> N. Holzberg, *The Ancient Fable*, 26.

<sup>137</sup> N. Holzberg, *The Ancient Fable*, 27. It is important to note that for the purposes of the following discussion, Lucian's engagement with an Aesopic tradition is the focus, not necessarily

<sup>138</sup> Though Plutarch would likely be turning in his grave at the notion of being included among Second Sophistic authors, for the purposes of structural simplicity, I have chosen to discuss him here.

<sup>139</sup> Adrados comprehensively collates the extensive presence of Aesop throughout Plutarch's *Moralia*. Of particular note are the following dialogues, *How to Profit by One's Enemies* 86e-f; *Advice to Bride and Groom* 139d, 141d, 143e and *On Compliancy* 531, 535. For a complete list of Aesopic allusions in Plutarch, see F.R. Adrados, *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable*, 733.

quite explicitly that “there is not even a trace of either ideological or class hostility between Aesop and the seven sages in Plutarch’s *Banquet*,” but rather that he “occupies an exceptional place,” arguing that “Plutarch’s Aesop is not a lowly guest at the banquet, but an admirable philosopher in his own right, utterly unlike the scandalous hero of the *Life of Aesop*.”<sup>140</sup> This exceptional place, states Gibbs, perhaps appears “subordinate and marginalized,”<sup>141</sup> yet is part of the performance<sup>142</sup> of wisdom in the banquet setting, in which Aesop comes to represent a playful (and perhaps more accessible) form of wisdom. Plutarch, she summarises, “uses the banquet scene of the sages to stage an interplay between a variety of modes of philosophical discourse,”<sup>143</sup> in which the higher and lower forms can be skilfully merged. The presence of Aesop in this sympotic setting becomes particularly significant in my Chapter Two, wherein the notions of hybrids in a transgressive state is addressed. There I will argue that there are levels of hybridity, and the infiltration of corrupted hybrids in the sympotic space becomes a core means of critiquing the hybridity of contemporary philosophers. This mixing of high and low culture in the context of space directly embraces this Aesopic hybridity of wisdom in fable.

With this perspective upon Plutarch’s Aesop in mind, it is useful to consider the presence of the fable itself at the banquet. There are two explicit references to Aesop’s fables in the *Banquet*: the first of these acts as an illustration of hypocrisy, wherein Aesop relates the story of the wolf coming upon the shepherd eating a sheep, and the wolf remarks that the shepherd would make uproar if the roles were reversed (Perry 453). The second of the fables is related not by Aesop, but by Cleobulus, and tells of the Dog in the Winter and Summer (Perry 449). In defining an individual as “one man and sometimes another in his needs, which vary according to his desires and fortunes” (Plut. *Septem*. 14), he is compared to the dog of Aesop, who, despite curling up into a ball due to the winter’s cold, considered the task of making himself shelter by the summer (when he was outstretched) to be too great.

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<sup>140</sup> Stefano Jedrkiewicz, *Il convitato sullo sgabello: Plutarco, Esopo ed i Sette Savi. Filologia e Critica*, 80. (Pisa/Rome: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 1997) 171.

<sup>141</sup> L. Gibbs, Review of Stefano Jedrkiewicz, *Il convitato sullo sgabello: Plutarco, Esopo ed i Sette Savi. Filologia e Critica*, 80. (Pisa/Rome: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 1997) in Bryn Mawr Classical Review 1999.05.23.

<sup>142</sup> For more on the notion of performance in the symposium, see R. Martin, ‘The Seven Sages as Performers of Wisdom’ in *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece: Cult, Performance, Politics* edited by L. Kurke and C. Dougherty (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 108-130.

<sup>143</sup> L. Gibbs, Review of Stefano Jedrkiewicz, *Il convitato sullo sgabello*.

The fable, and the figure of Aesop, are utilised in this single dialogue of Plutarch's to great effect. The inclusion of the fable offers a tone of popular culture, however in the context of the dinner, the fable is also representative of the wisdom of the Sages, as exemplified by the figure of Aesop. Where Aesop is traditionally a subversive, lesser figure, in the Plutarchan imagination his presence is valued immensely.

In addition to these representations of fable and Aesop, as Kurke notes, it is possible to identify a number of other similarities between the Plutarchan Dinner and the anonymous *Life of Aesop*. Kurke argues that the *Life* deliberately alludes to the *Symposium* through anecdotes of the Seven Sages being transferred to Aesop, portraying the Aesopic parody of "high wisdom."<sup>144</sup> Two instances are most striking, for as we will see, the words of wisdom that emanate from Bias, one of the Seven Sages, come to be replicated and twisted by the character of Aesop. Kurke identifies two primary instances in Plutarch's banquet that are satirised in the *Life*. The first of these, she states, is replicated almost exactly; Bias receives a request from Amasis (Egyptian pharaoh) to solve a puzzle that will prove his wisdom, having been given the challenge by the Ethiopian King to "drink the sea." Bias provides a solution with ease, stating that he must "hold back the rivers that case their water into the sea, while he himself is drinking up the sea as it is now," as "the order concerns this, not the sea as it will be later" (Plut. *Banq.* 6.151d). This anecdote is replicated exactly in the *Life of Aesop*, to the extent that not only does the wise sage solve the problem (in this case, Aesop himself), but the solution itself is identical.<sup>145</sup>

Kurke gives far more attention to the second of the Sage's wise words, largely due to their different contexts in the *Life*. This instance concerns Bias' solution to the problem sent to him by the King, wherein he is to choose the part of an animal for sacrifice that is the best and the worst,<sup>146</sup> and decides to choose the tongue (Plut. *Banq.*

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<sup>144</sup> L. Kurke, *Aesopic Conversations*, 217. The Aesopic parody of Plutarch's *Banquet* is also noted by Nagy, yet states in contrast that "Aesopic discourse as not only a parodistic alternative version of socially higher forms of comparable discourse but also as an actual cognate of these higher forms" (G. Nagy, 'Diachrony and the Case of Aesop' *Classics@* 9: (2011): 66.

<sup>145</sup> L. Kurke, *Aesopic Conversations*, 218.

<sup>146</sup> Discussions of the traditions surrounding the Seven Sages can be found in I.M. Konstantakos, 'Trial by Riddle: The Testing of the Counsellor and the Contest of Kings in the Legend of Amasis and Bias' *Classica et mediaevalia* 55 (2004): 90-100 and C. Jouanno, 'Vie d'Esopé' in *La Roue à livres* 47 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2006) 20-21.

2.146). While the *Life* also features Aesop proving the tongue to be the ‘best’ and ‘worst’ part of an animal, as Kurke notes, the context does not relate to sacrifice of the animal, but rather, the tongue is bought as a commodity for the consumption by Xanthus’ guests.<sup>147</sup> There is the suggestion that there is not only a parody of the wisdom of Bias in the *Life*, but also a parody of assumed equality in the division of sacrificial meat; rather than being divided among the population, the sacrificial tongue of Plutarch’s *Banquet* is bought and fed to the elite members of society, and becomes a symbol of the grotesque and the abject.<sup>148</sup>

In this context, the treatment of Aesop in Plutarch’s *Banquet* reveals once again the assimilation of wisdom to the fabulist, while simultaneously embracing the association with fable that the name Aesop implies. It is, however, the subsequent treatment of the Aesopic tradition that is crucial, for while the appearance of Aesop in Plutarch’s works reveals the importance of Aesop as a Sage, the *Life of Aesop* exemplifies the tales in their role as rhetorical tools. As Kurke states, the anecdote about the tongue is attributed to a variety of wise figures in various ancient sources,<sup>149</sup> and it is the manipulation of this *topos* in periods following that is crucial for the following discussion. As will be shown, like the *Life*, Lucian similarly embraces elements of the elite and the popular culture in his satires, transforming the voices of popular culture into the true philosophers of the second century AD.

### *Dio Chrysostom*

The orations of Dio Chrysostom too, show the relationship of the figure of Aesop to wisdom, most prominently in his seventy-second oration. Here, Aesop is once again acknowledged as being included among the seven sages, being praised for both his wisdom, and his skill in composing tales for they who took pleasure in listening to him (οἷων αὐτοὶ ἥδιστ’ ἄν ἀκούοιεν; *D. Chr.* 72.13). As with Plutarch above, in this Second Sophistic context, the figure of Aesop becomes inextricable from the fable genre.

The oration is concerned with personal appearance, and the way in which an individual’s dress invites assumptions about their profession, by reference to standards

<sup>147</sup> L. Kurke, *Aesopic Conversations*, 221.

<sup>148</sup> L. Kurke, *Aesopic Conversations*, 222.

<sup>149</sup> L. Kurke, *Aesopic Conversations*, 218-9, n. 41. Forefront among these is Plutarch himself, referencing the tale in *Mor.* 38b, (On Listening to Lectures and 506c (Concerning Talkativeness).

of appropriate dress. However the focus, for Dio, are those who dress in a cloak, have a beard and provoke a strong reaction from the public; the philosopher is mocked, irritated and accosted, despite the public perception that he wears the traditional dress of the philosopher. Dio then concludes his introduction with a proverb that ridicules the sheer mass of philosophers who are now living in the city (72.4),<sup>150</sup> and goes on to explain the reasons why the philosophers are scorned; they are ignorant and they make fun of the public behind their back, considering them to be unenlightened (72.8). There is an exception to this opinion of philosophers, those who fawn over the so-called philosophers merely on account of their appearance. Dio illustrates the dangers of such behavior by showing that the flatterers expect the kind of wisdom that had, in the past, been espoused by figures such as Diogenes and Socrates, but they are to be sorely disappointed, as shown by the fable following.

Dio recounts the fable of the Owl and the Other Birds (Perry 437), wherein the birds, having sought advice from the Owl, choose to reject the course of action proposed. It is only after the fact that the advice of the Owl was proven to be correct, and thus the birds now dedicate themselves to the wisdom of the Owl. In Dio's version, despite such dedication from the birds, the owls of contemporary times no longer possess the wisdom of the Owl, but only their feathers, eyes and beak, and are considered more ignorant than the other birds (72.15).<sup>151</sup> It is clear that the fable is used to act as a comparison to contemporary philosophers; they too, merely have the appearance of the philosopher, but cannot offer the wisdom that is associated with the title.<sup>152</sup>

Dio's use of the fable in this oration is especially significant for the following discussion, as it is argued that Lucian utilises the Aesopic tradition to a similar effect. By attributing animal characteristics to contemporary philosophers, and engaging with the fable genre, Lucian cleverly engages with the fable and Aesop as a means of

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<sup>150</sup> "...the whole world to-day is virtually crowded with persons such as I have described [philosophers with long hair, beard and no tunic], yes, I might almost say that they have grown more numerous than the shoemakers and fullers and jesters or the workers at any other occupation whatever. Therefore in our day too possibly it could be said with good reason that *every catboat is under sail and every cow is dragging a plow* (Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses 61-80, Fragments, Letters*. Edited and translated by H. L. Crosby, Loeb Classical Library 385 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961) 179.

<sup>151</sup> Perry includes this alternative ending in his collection of fables, however the traditional conclusion has the Owl refusing to give any further advice, and merely complaining. (L. Gibbs, *Aesop's Fables*, 226)

<sup>152</sup> Dio's 12<sup>th</sup> Olympian Oration also evokes such a sentiment, describing the means by which the manner and appearance of the peacock attracts the "spectator's gaze," yet is perhaps not as deserving as the less overtly appealing nightingale (Dio. Chr. 12. 2-3).

critique. While the fable is utilised in the above examples in quite oblique ways, it is argued that Lucian's engagement with the Aesopic extends beyond fable parallels. Rather, Lucian also embraces the hybridity of high and low culture that is facilitated by the fable, creating a critique for a popular audience.

### *Aelian*

It is also useful to view the works of Aelian through this Aesopic framework, not on account of the prevalence of fable, but rather due to the notable *absence* of the figure of Aesop. Unlike the authors discussed previously, Aelian, in his *De natura animalium* (*NA*), refers to the fabulist by name only once. Given the way that Aelian's anecdotes frequently verge on fable, this is an especially striking omission. Moreover, the only direct reference to Aesop comes merely as a quote from Aristophanes' *Birds*,<sup>153</sup> framed by Aelian's discussion of the Hoopoe. Unmarked allusions to Aesopic fables are nevertheless present in Aelian's *NA*, and it is what appears to be the deliberate omission of Aesop in these instances that is the focus for the following discussion.

Smith discusses the opening sections of the *NA*, and highlights some important features of Aelian's own justification in composing the work. First, Aelian claims to be interested in the animal world on account of animals' wisdom and justice, despite the frequent denial of λόγος to the animal world by humans (Ael. *NA*. *Prologue*). Yet as Smith notes, while such defences of animal wisdom are found in a number of classical and imperial authors, such perceptions largely align with the Platonist outlook, in direct opposition to the Stoic position.<sup>154</sup> It is striking, in this light, that Aelian's philosophical alignment is predominantly Stoic, and while this affiliation indeed presents itself throughout the *NA*, the questioning of human superiority over animals "push[es] traditional Stoic language to its limits."<sup>155</sup> The work, due to his merely nominal

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<sup>153</sup> "The Athenians too tell some such wondrous tale in a myth regarding the Lark, which Aristophaes, the writer of comedies appears to be to have followed in his *Birds*" (Av. 471-5; Aelian, *On the Characteristics of Animals Volume III*. Edited and translated by A.F. Schofield. Loeb Classical Library 449 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959) 267)

<sup>154</sup> S. D. Smith, *Man and Animal in Severan Rome: The Literary Imagination of Claudius Aelianus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) 12. See too, S. Newmeyer, *Animals in Greek and Roman Thought: A Sourcebook* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011) 1-26; R. Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals*, 78-96; I.S. Gilhuis, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 37-52 and S Newmeyer, *Animals, Rights and Reason in Plutarch and Modern Ethics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006)10-47.

<sup>155</sup> S. D. Smith *Man and Animal in Severan Rome*, 119.



adherence to Stoic doctrines, comes to adhere less to the strict rules of dialectic that Stoicism espouses, but instead “indulges in sheer wonderment at the world of animals.”<sup>156</sup>

However, this is not to say that Aelian does not consider the work to be of historical and philosophical value. As Smith notes, he distances himself from the pseudo-philosophers who are merely interested in money, stating that he has no desire for fame, but merely wishes to undertake a Socratic philosophical investigation. Crucially, Aelian prefers to be numbered among the ‘wise poets’ (ποιηταὶ σοφοί, Ael. *Epilogue*), those interested in investigating the secrets of nature and historians – embracing the features of these genres to create a literary work that both reflects and critiques the third century AD.<sup>157</sup>

With these two features of Aelian in mind, it is possible to consider his particular use of the fable in the *NA*. While Aesop does not appear as someone to whom the fable is attributed, it is nevertheless significant that Aelian includes the fable genre throughout. However, given Aelian’s desire to present his work as a scientific inquiry, the inclusion of the fable is problematic, as it can call into question the credibility of his text, making it appear a mere compilation of folk tales. Through consideration of the particular fables found in Aelian’s *NA*, it is possible to identify these two features, and consider them as an important development of the fable genre.

The first of Aelian’s retellings of fables comes in Book Two, in discussing the crows that reside in Libya. Aelian praises the intellect of these animals, by telling of the way in which the crows gather stones to place in a water vessel, encouraging the water to rise and allowing them to drink (*NA*. 2.48). This anecdote is a direct retelling of The Crow and the Water Jar (Perry 390), yet there is no mention of Aesop or the tale’s fable nature.

Aelian also recounts the anecdote of the Beaver and his Testicles (Perry 118), which relates that the Beaver, when being chased by hunting dogs, chooses to bite off his testicles as he is aware that he is being hunted precisely on account of their medicinal powers. Once again, Aelian (*NA*. 6.34) gives no indication that this tale derives from the world of fable, removing the detail of hunting dogs but nevertheless

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<sup>156</sup> S. D. Smith, *Man and Animal in Severan Rome*, 120.

<sup>157</sup> S.D. Smith, *Man and Animal in Severan Rome*, 14-16.

retaining the self-castration of the beaver as a form of self-preservation. In these two fables, it is clear that the notion of animal wisdom is forefront. However there is nevertheless a strict scientific inquiry behind the two; the observation of the Crow in the Water Jar, while fable-like in nature, has since been proven to be a capability of crows,<sup>158</sup> and the fable of the beaver relates the useful nature of the beaver's testicles to humankind. However in Aelian's account there is merely the hint of the beaver's medicinal properties, as he states only that the beaver is aware of the hunter's intention in hunting him. While the fable reflects Aelian's scientific inquiry, it simultaneously reflects an engagement with Hellenic tradition, presuming common knowledge from his audience.

The third recounting of the fable in Aelian is framed around the wisdom of Thales, who managed to outsmart a donkey. The donkey, states Aelian, accidentally dissolved his load of salt by slipping in the water, and realised that this was an effective way to lighten his load. His owner appealed to Thales, who suggested putting sponges in the load, causing the donkey to make his load heavier (*NA*. 7.42). The inclusion of Thales in this tale is significant, as he does not feature in the original fable. Rather, the fable of the Merchant, the Donkey and the Salt (Perry 180) merely suggests that the donkey's owner outsmarted the donkey himself, and not through the aid of the sage Thales. Aelian's Hellenic knowledge is emphasised through his retelling, through the inclusion of Thales. Yet this is no mere Greek philosopher, but one who represents the epitome of Hellenic wisdom about the nature of things, and thus once again it is possible to view the scientific inquiry that Aelian wishes to emphasise.

Finally, Aelian constructs what Gibbs titles an "elaborate version"<sup>159</sup> of the Snake, the Eagle and the Farmer (Perry 395), in which he relates a story about an Eagle being grateful for aid from a human. In Aelian's version, an eagle is rescued from the grips of a snake by a farmer, on account of the Eagle being an animal sacred to Zeus. Following his act, the snake plots against the man and places poison in his drink, which the Eagle topples over as a show of gratitude to the man for previously saving his life. Misinterpreting on account of his thirst, he is angry at the eagle, until an intervention from Zeus allows the man to see the truth (*NA*. 17.37). In the fable, however, there is

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<sup>158</sup> It should not be ignored that the fable of the crow and the water vessel has since been proven to be an accurate occurrence (H. Leggett, 'Clever Crows Prove Aesop's Fable Is More Than Fiction' *Wired*: 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2009. <https://www.wired.com/2009/08/aesopscrows/>).

<sup>159</sup> L. Gibbs, *Aesop's Fables*, 39.

no mention of Zeus (since the fable resides in the Golden Age of Kronos), and once again, Aelian makes no mention of the story being derived from fable, again modifying details so as to engage covertly with the Hellenic roots of the story without disrupting the veracity of his inquiry.

In Aelian's *De natura animalium*, the Aesopic fables provide anecdotal information for Aelian to draw upon in creating his portrait of the animal kingdom and animals' characteristics. However the absence of Aesop's name in these retellings creates a curious tension regarding Aelian's intention. The fables, rather than being treated as Golden Age stories aimed to teach morals, are instead treated as factual information about the animals he speaks of, thereby distancing these stories from the world of fable. The context in which one would expect fables to be prevalent in fact reveals little desire on the part of Aelian to acknowledge the fable tradition, suggesting a concerted attempt to add validity to his work. Aelian does not shy away from attributing anecdotes to their sources in general, but rather engages with those authors whom he considers to be representative of scientific inquiry.<sup>160</sup> There is the suggestion, through Aelian's omission of the fable from his work, that he wishes to distance himself from the more popular nature of the fable, encouraging his audience to view him as an elite author. Yet the fable cannot be altogether absent, as Aelian wishes to maintain the distance of his inherent Roman-ness from the work, and prove his Hellenic prowess in language and culture. In this respect, the Roman elite culture remains distant in a similar manner to the fable itself, positioning Aelian in the interspace between the elite and non-elite. In the context of fable, the *NA* is thus a crucial example of the treatment of fable during the Imperial period. As we will see, Lucian's treatment differs greatly. The satirist, by engaging directly with Aesop, utilises the characteristics of animals derived from fable in his critique of contemporary philosophers, and embraces the dual audience that the hybridity of his work may offer.

*Philostratus*<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Both Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia* and Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* in particular are frequently a source of information for Aelian. For a comparison of these works in the context of animal communication, see T. Fögen, 'Pliny the Elder's Animals: Some Remarks on the Narrative Structure of Nat. Hist. 8-11' *Hermes* 135 (2007): 184-198.

<sup>161</sup> Although translations of Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists* and the *Life of Apollonius* have received recent amendments by Stefec and Jones respectively, it is worth noting that for my purposes, the translations by Wright and Conybeare offer a sufficient basis for analysis.

Finally, it is worth moving forward in time to Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*, as it is one of the fuller accounts from antiquity (excluding the *Life of Aesop* itself) regarding the figure of Aesop and the fable tradition.<sup>162</sup> The early chapters of Book Five detail the journey of Apollonius through Hispania. After passing and detailing various points in Roman History, Apollonius arrives at the foot of the volcano Mt. Etna, prompting a discussion with his companions about philosophy and *mythos*, and subsequently about Aesop. His companions, on being asked their thoughts on the fabulist, state that "he is a mythologist and writer of fables and no more." However Apollonius vehemently disagrees, stating that the fables of Aesop are more useful for providing wisdom than the poets, on account of both his distance from the fables and the manipulation of small incidents to show great things, framed around the conception of the story as conspicuously false (*VA*. 14) What follows is Apollonius' recounting of a story, aiming to add validity to the wisdom found in fables; he states that when Hermes was dispensing the gifts from the house of wisdom, he accidentally left Aesop out, eventually providing him with the only item left: μυθολογία (*VA*. 15).<sup>163</sup>

The Aesopic μῦθος derives from precisely the same place as philosophy and rhetoric, revealing the importance of Aesop and the fable to the intellectual tradition. However as Apollonius himself notes, the fables belong to the realm of childhood stories (*VA*. 14), coming only in adulthood to influence human opinions of particular animals. The Philostratean treatment of fable reveals its inextricable link with the figure of Aesop and validates the fable genre as a source of wisdom. Like the authors previous, Philostratus also includes a re-telling of fable, situated in the context of a discussion between Apollonius and Damis, suggesting that taming a lion holds similarities to taming a tyrant (*VA*. 4.36-40). Damis is inspired by the comparison to tell the fable of The Fox, the Lion and The Footprints (Perry 142), wherein the fox is described as being wise on account of his decision not to visit the ill lion due to a threat of being eaten.

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<sup>162</sup> The following discussion of Aesop in relation to Philostratus is limited to the treatment in the *Vita Apollonii*. Nevertheless, it is important to note that Aesop too features in his *Imagines*, with Philostratus' *ekphrasis* of a painting of Aesop reflecting the role of animal characters, moral lessons, and importantly the role of the slave in the fable tradition (Phil. *Im*. 1.3).

<sup>163</sup> As Miles and Demoen note, this fable regarding the distribution of skills is a Philostratean allusion to Plato's *Protagoras* (Pl. *Prot.* 320c-322d; G. Miles and K. Demoen, 'In Praise of the Fable' 32-33). See too G. Anderson, 'Folklore versus Fakelore: Some Problems in the Life of Apollonius' in *Theios Sophistes*, edited by K. Demoen and D. Praet, (Leiden: Brill, 2008) 211-224 and G.-J. van Dijk *Ainai, Mythoi, Logoi: Fables in Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic Greek Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1997) Leiden, 450-1.

Apollonius disagrees, stating the fox would have appeared more clever to him if he had visited the ill lion, but managed to avoid being eaten.

The re-telling of this fable, in the context of a discussion of tyrants acts as evidence for the use of fable as a tool to comment upon social truths through a fictional medium.<sup>164</sup> As will be shown, Lucian likewise utilises the fable to a similar effect, embracing the inextricable nature of Aesop and the fable, and offering a means not to control tyrants, but contemporary philosophers.

However the significance of Philostratus to the Aesopic tradition, and to the Lucianic treatment, arguably extends beyond the mere retelling of fable and inclusion of Aesop as a source of wisdom. Unlike the authors discussed above, Philostratus' treatment of Aesop engages with the Cynic associations that are most extensively drawn out in the *Life of Aesop*. While Philostratus predominantly presents the Aesopic tradition as a source of philosophical insight, such wisdom becomes entwined with Cynic philosophy, encouraging a reflection upon the position of Aesop during the Second Sophistic period.

The association of Aesop with Cynic philosophical wisdom is argued by both Jedrkiewicz and Adrados,<sup>165</sup> with whom I concur that much of the depiction of Aesop, and the content of the fables, reflect upon the teachings of Cynic philosophy, as discussed above. Throughout Adrados' *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable*, he reflects upon the assimilation of fable to the doctrine of Cynicism, which is especially evident in the *Life of Aesop*.<sup>166</sup> What is significant for the current discussion is the way in which the motifs of Cynicism come to be expressed through the fable, becoming a part of the tradition more broadly. Adrados notes that certain 'types' of fables were perhaps more suited to the infusion of Cynic themes, allowing the core tenets of the Cynic Doctrine to be portrayed.<sup>167</sup>

In the context of Philostratus' *VA* however, this association arguably becomes all the more overt, not through the representation of Cynic concerns disguised through

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<sup>164</sup> For a detailed discussion of the role of fable as a social tool in the context of the early empire, see J. Henderson, *Telling Tales on Caesar: Roman Stories from Phaedrus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) and T. Hawkins, *Iambic Poetics in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) 109-111

<sup>165</sup> S. Jedrkiewicz, 'Il covitato sullo sgabello'; F.R. Adrados, *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable*, 659-83.

<sup>166</sup> F.R. Adrados, *History of the Graeco-Roman Fable* (Brill: 1999) Leiden, 604. See too 646-683.

<sup>167</sup> F.R. Adrados, *History of the Graeco-Roman Fable*, 610ff.

fable,<sup>168</sup> but through the appearance of the Cynic philosophers Demetrius and Menippus. Miles and Demoen discuss the representation of Menippus in the *VA*, who is identified as the student of the Cynic Demetrius. What is significant about the inclusion of the Menippus character is his shift towards the teachings of Apollonius himself, following a revealing encounter with a lamia (*VA*. 4.25). As Miles and Demoen outline, this lamia encounter not only allows for a distancing from the opinions of Menippus, but also sets up themes of appearances being not what they seem.<sup>169</sup>

This introductory information regarding Menippus becomes all the more significant when he returns to be educated by Apollonius regarding the philosophical opportunities that fable may afford. Menippus, the *Cynic*, acts as an important feature of the use of fable in Philostratus' *VA*. While he primarily allows for the narrative to reveal Apollonius' views on the fable genre, his inclusion reminds the audience of the inherently Cynic nature of the fable and the Aesopic as a whole. In what follows, This Cynic association with the fable becomes crucial. The association, in Philostratus, of Menippus and Cynicism with fable and the Aesopic exhibits the inherent hybridity of both traditions. As has been outlined, the figure and character of Menippus<sup>170</sup> in Lucian and the wider literary tradition provides a hybrid precedent that Lucian may utilise in critiquing contemporary philosophy. As will be argued in Chapters 4 and 5, Menippus becomes a figure that is inherently hybridised, for his capacity to transgress spatial boundaries. Yet unlike the hybridity of the philosopher-sophists, this capacity to occupy different spheres does not act as a corrupting force, but rather, remedies the effect of the philosopher-sophists upon the divine realm.

This overview of select authors of the Imperial period and their use of fable aims to set up the following discussion of Lucian's particular use of the fable tradition. As had been evidenced, elements of Cynic philosophy continue to be an inherent part of the fable and Aesopic tradition, and the animal fable continues to be used as a source of critique of philosophy and false professions of wisdom. What is additionally crucial is the role of Aesop as a pseudo-historical figure within this tradition. Aesop shows an unlikely intellect that belies his appearance, and in the process demonstrates the use of

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<sup>168</sup> G. Miles and K. Demoen, 'In Praise of the Fable: The Philostratean Aesop,' 38-9.

<sup>169</sup> G. Miles and K. Demoen, 'In Praise of the Fable,' 29.

<sup>170</sup> It should be noted that the Philostratean Menippus, while certainly inspired by the historical Cynic that Lucian includes in his satires, is a distinctly different Menippus.

fable as a rhetorical tool. However as will be evidenced, it is Lucian's use of fable that embraces more thoroughly the Cynic, serio-comic opportunities afforded by the fable, and in doing so, retains the rhetorical power of the fable, while simultaneously maintaining a broader affinity with popular culture. Lucian's ability to utilise fable as a means to address a hybrid audience allows for the formulation of additional hybrid elements. The following dissertation addresses these elements, underpinning them as a Lucianic manipulation of the hybrid form.

## Lucian and the Fable

References to Aesop and the fable appear throughout the works of Lucian. While Aesop's ethnic background and tendency towards the comical are only referred to once in passing (Luc. *VH.* 2.18.3) the fables in particular are alluded to nine times throughout his extant corpus, which is a notably high figure for authors in antiquity.<sup>171</sup> In what follows, I will identify and critique the instances of the fable in Lucian, and subsequently utilise these instances to reveal the broader use of the Aesopic tradition in his works. The following overview reveals that Lucian expresses an explicit knowledge of the Aesopic fable, through the overt references to the fable culture. Having identified the presence of the fable behind the writings of Lucian, it will be possible to see that the Aesopic and the fable not only pervades the work through explicit reference, but also implicitly through an interaction with high and low culture that permeates the genre of the fable.

Primary among the fables references in Lucian is the fable of the *Donkey and the Lion's Skin* which features in the corpus three separate times. The fable tells of the donkey who, despite being dressed in a lion skin, fails to disguise his true nature, due to the sound of his voice (distinctively donkey-esque).<sup>172</sup> In these three references, Lucian frames the fable around critique of human characters, focused upon critique of the pretensions of contemporary sophists. In *Fugitivi*, Lucian follows on from his

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<sup>171</sup> Lucianic references to Aesop and the fable are littered throughout his dialogues; Luc. *Fug.* 13; Luc. *Pseud.* 3; *Pseud.* 5; Luc. *Pisc.* 32; *Pisc.* 36; *Icar.* 10; *Herm.* 84; *D. Meretr.* 14; *Ind.* 4; *Ind.* 30. These are discussed in full below. Compare Aristophanes, wherein direct references to Aesop and the fable (rather than proverbial allusions) are constrained primarily to the *Birds* and the *Wasps*: *Av.* 471ff.; *Av.* 652-3; *Vesp.* 1401ff.; *Vesp.* 1427ff.; *Vesp.* 1435ff.; *Vesp.* 1448; *Lys.* 695; *Peace.* 127-134.

<sup>172</sup> L. Floridi, 'Âne (et braiment) / Donkey (and braying)' in *Dictionnaire des images métapoétique*, 1-5.

characterisation of sophists as a disgrace, “a motley Centaur breed,” (*Fug.* 10) stating that their appearance reminds him vividly of the donkey of fable, as their disguise is similarly disclosed the moment they speak (*Luc. Fug.* 13). Similarly the fable appears again in the *Pseudologista*, which attacks a critic of Lucian, who has deprecated the satirist’s grasp of the Attic Language. Lucian states to the mistaken sophist that “there is no need of anyone to strip away your lion’s skin that you may be revealed a donkey,” as his appearance is enough, not even requiring the critic to speak in an uneducated tongue (*Luc. Pseud.* 3). Finally, the fable is found in Lucian’s *Fisherman* dialogue, wherein he defends his intentions behind the companion dialogue, the *Sale of Lives*. Once again, the pseudo-philosophers, the centaur-like sophists, are “emulators of the ass at Cyme,” yet cannot fool the stranger. This stranger has knowledge of the physique and make up of the lion and the donkey respectively (*Luc. Pisc.* 32), heightening true wisdom in direct contrast to the false philosophers.

In these three instances of the fable in Lucian, it is clear that the tale is being utilised by the author in order to apply the ‘moral’ of the fable to contemporary philosophers. The sophists are as easily uncovered in their disguise as the donkey of fable – despite “cloaking themselves in the high-sounding name of Virtue” (*Icar.* 29; περιθέμενοι),<sup>173</sup> as soon as they speak, it is clear that they are ordinary individuals, merely disguised as philosophers. Significantly, the fable serves to emphasise the hybrid nature of the sophists, portraying them as some kind of combination of a donkey and a lion. This hybrid, as the fable shows, not only fails to enhance the success of its disparate parts, but is shown to be a complete failure on account of its incapacity to meld the two separate animals. The fable of the donkey and the lion’s skin exemplifies the Lucianic use of hybridity, for the way in which Lucian’s hybrid genre and the hybrid philosopher-sophists are presented simultaneously at either end of the spectrum. Where the philosopher-sophists are displayed as unsuccessful hybrids, the Lucianic genre has expertly melded the spheres of popular culture and the elite.

Associated with this theme of revealing the true nature of contemporary philosophers, Lucian also relates the fable of the *Monkeys and the Pyrrhic Dance* (Perry 463; *Pisc.* 36), wherein monkeys that have been taught to imitate human behaviour revert back to

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<sup>173</sup> This notion of ‘cloaking’ or ‘covering oneself’ encapsulates the primary concern of Lucian’s critique of philosophy, and the act of merely appearing to be a source of wisdom.



their primate form at the sight of nuts. The use of this fable, found in the *Fisherman*, acts as commentary on the greed of his sham philosophers – their disguise as ‘humans’ is revealed the moment they catch sight of gold (*Pisc.* 36).

The theme also appears a second time in the *Pseudologista*, embracing this similar theme. Here, the subject of Lucian’s tirade, the one who speaks of himself as a sophist, is said to have arrived in Olympia and given a speech. This speech, however, is characterised by Lucian as being “after the pattern of Aesop’s jackdaw, cobbled out of motley feathers of others” (*Pseud.* 5). The statement is modelled on another well-known fable from the Aesopic tradition, wherein the jackdaw attempts to make himself more appealing by using the feathers of other birds. Unsurprisingly, the wise owl notices her own feathers, and she and the other birds strip the jackdaw naked, revealing his true appearance (Perry 101).<sup>174</sup>

Towards the closing paragraphs of *Hermotimus*, Lycinus succeeds in convincing his interlocutor that the pursuit of philosophy, particularly Stoicism, is largely worthless. Despite the years of study that are involved in taking the path of the Stoa, one can never be sure that the chosen philosophy is the correct one, and Lycinus’ proof of this causes the devoted Hermotimus to despair. Lycinus consoles his interlocutor, recounting the fable of the *Fox and the Man Counting the Waves* (Perry 429; *Herm.* 84). The fable teaches the man not to be vexed at having lost count of the waves, only to start counting again. Lycinus suggests to his interlocutor, rather than crying over spilled milk (see, Stoicism), that he should act as he suggest: “better reconcile yourself now to living like an ordinary man; you will give up your extravagant haughty hopes and put yourself on a level with the commonalty; if you are sensible, you will not be ashamed to unlearn in your old age, and change your course for a better” (*Herm.* 84).

While this fable does not strictly act as a means to strip the sophist of his pretensions to wisdom, it nevertheless is used for a particular satirical means. The fox, speaking to the man in the fable, comes to be revealed as wiser as the man himself, teaching a philosophical lesson. Undoubtedly, such a mantle is likewise placed upon the character Lycinus (and thus Lucian himself), lowering the value of the Stoic philosopher below their external pretensions to virtue and wisdom.

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<sup>174</sup> A retelling of this fable also appears in Aelius Aristides in his Roman Oration (Ael. Arist. XXVI.57).

The *Ignorant Book Collector* features two fables to note, both of which confirm Lucian's use of fable to critique false professions of wisdom. In the opening sections of the essay, Lucian likens the book collector to the donkey in the *Donkey and the Lyre* fable (Perry 542; *Ind.* 4<sup>175</sup>). The fable, in its form in Phaedrus, features a donkey who wishes to play a lyre but cannot, due to a lack of talent. However in Lucian this fable is utilised to even greater extent against the book collector, who is not only compared to the untalented donkey, but also adds the detail of portrayed the donkey as *pretending* to be able to hear the tones of the lyre, yet is ultimately unable due to the lack of wisdom.

Finally, *The Dog in the Manger* fable (Perry 702; *Ind.* 30) is also featured in Lucian's *Ignorant Book Collector*, in his final critique against the unlearned scholar. The fable tells of a dog who refuses to allow others anything to eat, despite him not wanting it himself; the cattle are prevented from eating hay, even though the dog does not wish to eat it himself. Lucian likens the book collector to this hoggish dog, stating that it is simply useless him owning such a collection of educated works, as he does not have the wisdom to read them himself. What's more, the dog refuses to even share the books with others who may benefit. Once again, Lucian utilises the fable to critique philosophic pretensions, as the book-collector comes to represent pompous nature of the sophists. His false knowledge, facilitated only by his external appearance is revealed but Lucian to simply be a farce.<sup>176</sup>

In these instances of fables recounted by Lucian, it is clear that one of his primary goals in utilising the fable is to critique contemporary philosophy and sophistry through the fictional medium. What is crucial is that by simply identifying the fable, it is possible to view the dual audience in his works. The elite, pretentious sophists are the subject of elite satirical material, but by framing them around the Aesopic, Lucian offers his

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<sup>175</sup> See too Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, which makes a reference to a donkey playing a lyre (*D. Meretr.* 14).

<sup>176</sup> Two additional fables do feature in the works of Lucian. In *Icaromenippus*, Menippus is able to justify his ascent to the heavens by using the wings of birds due to the precedent that Aesop and his fable have set. Menippus states that from the fables, it appears that "Heaven is accessible to eagles, beetles, and sometimes camels" (*Icar.* 10). This statement refers to two fables from the Aesopic corpus; the main one is of course the story of the Eagle and the Dungbeetle (Perry 3) while the mention of camels evokes a fable wherein a camel meets with Zeus in the heavens (Perry 117). A more detailed discussion of this mention of the Aesopic is found in chapter 4, for the dialogue's relationship to philosophical ignorance.

critique to an audience of the popular classes. This dual audience, as will be shown, is utilised to great effect throughout the works, engaging with the features of the fable and Aesopic tradition beyond the fables themselves.

The above fables in Lucian consistently reflect the overall goal of his satire. These references, either presented as an offhand comment or recounted more fully, act as evidence of Lucian's familiarity with the genre. In addition to these explicit references to the fable, there are further, less obvious engagements with the tradition, in which Lucian exploits the forms and motifs of fable in order to critique the sophists through his own fictional disguise. The Aesopic tradition that is exemplified in the *Life of Aesop* offers a point of comparison with Lucian's use of fable in his intellectual polemic. Lucian's engagement with the fable reveals themes and dynamics similar to those of the Aesopic tradition more broadly, especially the parts of that tradition more overtly related to the Cynic doctrine. Lucian's use of fable goes beyond a simple philosophical critique, as it acts to bridge the divide between elite and non-elite culture. The fable assists Lucian in moving between high and low, in critiquing philosophy and sophistry simultaneously from inside and outside, and in writing for a dual, hybrid audience.

Lucian's dual, hybrid audience is a core concern for the following discussion. As has been shown, Lucian frequently engages with the fable, the Aesopic tradition, and importantly, its relationship to Cynicism. The hybridity of form that is evoked through the fable becomes enhanced through Lucian's particular use of it; by framing his satire around Aesop and the fable, Lucian is able to engage with the Golden Age tradition that underpins the fable, and utilise this for his own means. By using Aesop as a framework for discussion, it is possible to further understand the means by which Lucian constructs his satires, and attempt to discern a clearer picture of the Second Sophistic period, and its associated literature. As a satirist, it is not surprising that Lucian critiques contemporary philosophy, however it is argued that he achieves this critique through a particular means. A recognition of the Aesopic tradition preceding him complements his commentary upon hybridity, opening the reader to many and varied interpretations of the so-called corrupted hybrid. Hybridity, for Lucian, comes in many forms, and throughout the following discussion, these forms come to be further emphasised through the Aesopic. The fable's capacity to evoke a dual audience is a core concern for Lucian, and allows for him to embrace a type of literary hybridity in

his works. The animal fable too, allows for an exploration of the animal hybrid; the talking animal of the Golden Age is a hybrid in and of itself, and it is possible to see this reflection upon the Golden Age throughout the satires. However these hybrids must be contrasted with the hybridity, and corruption that consumes and costumes the contemporary philosophers. They evoke the pinnacle of the antagonist of the animal fable, exemplifying the opposite of the ideal. They represent wanton greed, false appearances, trickery, deception, vanity – all of that which the Cynic fable aims to reject. In assessing Lucian's dialogues in the context of the fable genre and of Aesop, it is possible to not only identify the use of Aesop as a means to speak truth through fiction, but as a Lucianic commentary upon what becomes of the corrupted hybrid philosopher, and does so right under the educated elite's noses.

## Chapter Two

### Centaurs and Fishy Philosophers

*They are of mixed race, at least they seem so now, when I can just see them. For many of them are like lions and centaurs, and other fierce creatures, and very many are like satyrs and the weak and cunning beasts; and they make quick exchanges of forms and qualities with one another.*

(Pl. *Polit.* 291a)

For the stranger in Plato's *Politicus*, politicians are a race of hybrid animals, a cunning changeable lot. These ones are distinct from the philosophically admirable statesman, an unpredictable sub-category of the sophist.<sup>177</sup> For Lucian, the philosopher-sophist adopts the mantle of hybrid, representing the *disharmonious* nature that defined Plato's politician. Philosophy herself, in Lucian's *Fugitivi*, deems the philosopher-sophist to be not unlike the Hippocentaur - a hybrid creature, incapable of being wholly dedicated to philosophy or to ignorance (Luc. *Fug.* 10). This motif of the hybrid animal plays a particular role throughout the works of Lucian, which the following discussion aims to explore, and the means by which it serves to enhance Lucian's critique of contemporary philosophy. In what follows, it becomes clear that the hybrid animal is a means by which Lucian is able to denigrate the philosopher-sophists of the Second Century AD. Yet as is shown, the explicit use of the hybrid animal as a metaphor for the sophists takes on a broader role in the satires, through the contrast between this disharmonious hybrid and that which can be considered the successful hybrid. Here, it is possible to further expand upon Lucian's use of the Aesopic tradition, as it is argued that the continued use of hybridity throughout the works taps into the Aesopic interplay between the elite and non-elite culture. The hybrid serves as a tool for Lucian to expand

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<sup>177</sup> As distinct from the Statesman, politicians are the "chief wizards among all the sophists, the chief pundits of the deceivers art." (For a detailed and comprehensive commentary on the text, See J.B. Skemp, *Plato: Statesman* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 2002).

upon the fable tradition, drawing on the very distinctly Aesopic trope of undermining the elite in favour of promoting the real wisdom that may be found through non-elite ideals. Lucian himself acts as a hybrid not unlike the figure of Aesop; where Aesop traverses the interspace between a slave and philosopher, Lucian explores hybridity in a range of forms, most overtly through the merging of dialogue and comedy. The purpose of the following chapter however, is to outline Lucian's use of the hybrid to denigrate the philosopher-sophists in order to promote true wisdom and reject deception. In so doing, the hybrid emerges as a complex literary tool with which Lucian may construct and disseminate his satire.

In what follows, I will first discuss the broader definition of the philosopher-sophist, as reflected in Plato's own *Sophist*, so as to construct a comparison between Classical and Second Sophistic perceptions of the rhetorically inclined philosopher. With such a definition in mind, it is possible to turn to some of Lucian's dialogues more directly concerned with philosophy, namely the *Sale of Lives* and *The Fisherman*, so as to gain an understanding of the primary concerns that Lucian's satires aim to reflect upon. In these two dialogues, it becomes clear that the anxieties of the Cynic fable continue through to the time of Lucian; rather than living in accordance with nature, the contemporary philosophers are concerned more with wealth and greed.

The mock economic value ascribed to philosophy and philosophers in these two dialogues reveals a contrast with the presentation of the slave in Aesopic texts. It is this emphasis upon monetary value that is important for the following discussion, as money is one of the dominant factors that corrupts contemporary philosophy. Rather than being dedicated to wisdom and philosophical learning, the hybrid philosopher-sophists are concerned only with appearing to be wise, and using such appearances in order to boost their reputation and wealth. As Möllendorff outlines, successful Lucianic hybrids must consist of a "reduction of their typical characteristics to a measure compatible with combination,"<sup>178</sup> and the contemporaneous sophists have not achieved such measure. The following discussion assesses the corruption of the philosopher-sophists in both the Platonic dialogues and in the second century AD, and then view such corruption through the lens of the hybrid centaur. Lucian creates an inversion of societal

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<sup>178</sup> P. von Möllendorff, 'Camels, Celts and Centaurs: Lucian's Aesthetic Concept – The *Charis* of the Hybrid' in *Desultoria Scientia: Genre in Apuleius' Metamorphoses and Related Texts* edited by R. R. Nauta (Belgium: Peeters, 2005) 83.

perceptions, coming to (negatively) portray the philosopher-sophists as centaur-like in nature. They no longer desire to seek the truth, but are immoderate in their desire for wealth, and their arrogance makes them a hybrid that is incapable of forming a successful whole.

## Catching Sophists

Distinguishing between the philosopher and the sophist was a common argumentative move in antiquity,<sup>179</sup> and the notion of one ‘corrupting’ the other is a focus for the following discussion. Such an exercise is found in Philostratus’ *Lives of the Sophists*, as he differentiates those who are sophists in reputation (but pursue philosophy) and those who should be considered ‘proper’ (κύριος) sophists (*VS.* 479; 484; 492).<sup>180</sup> Philostratus’ idealised notion of the ‘true’ sophist is, however, somewhat problematised in reference to Philostratus’ own letter to the Empress Julia Domna. As Penella argues, the suggestion that Plato imitates the sophistry of Gorgias demonstrates Philostratus’ perception that philosophy and sophistry are well-matched, despite Plato’s overt distaste towards the race of sophists.<sup>181</sup> Similarly in the context of Philostratus, Billault has identified the distinction between philosopher and rhetorician in his biography of Apollonius of Tyana. Apollonius is characterised as largely rejecting rhetoric in favour of philosophy, but through his status as a divine man, he is granted rhetorical authority, and utilises this authority to espouse the philosophical search for truth.<sup>182</sup>

<sup>179</sup> In addition to Plato, Synesius in the late 4th Century AD also discusses the importance of a distinction, however focusses his definition solely around Dio Chrysostom (*Syn.* 1.59).

<sup>180</sup> It should not be ignored that despite being credited with defining the Second Sophistic itself, Philostratus is nevertheless biased in his definition of the sophist. As Eshleman discusses, the ‘good’ sophist often happens to be associated with Herodes Atticus and his followers, coming to impart a favourable reputation upon Philostratus himself. Those included under the title of ‘sophist’ (as opposed to those whom Philostratus omits) need not have demonstrated “rhetorical excellence” per se, as their acquisition of the title relates to their relationship to Herodes, and significantly, their reputation as sophists among Philostratus’ sophistic circle. K. Eshleman, ‘Defining the Circle of Sophists: Philostratus and the Construction of the Second Sophistic,’ *Classical Philology* 103 (2008): 401; 405.

<sup>181</sup> R.J. Penella, ‘Philostratus’ Letter to Julia Domna’ *Hermes* 107:2 (1979): 161-168, esp. 167-8). Such an examination of this merging of sophistry and philosophy is not restricted to the work of Philostratus; as Demoen and Praet highlight, a Plutarchan fragment describes the introduction of sophistry into rhetoric to be an ‘illness’ started by Gorgias. K. Demoen and D. Praet, ‘Philostratus, Plutarch, Gorgias and the End of Plato’s *Phaedrus*,’ *Classical Quarterly* 62.1 (2012): 437. For further analysis of the letter to Julia Domna, see J.-J. Flinterman, ‘De sofist, de keizerin & de concubine: Philostratus brief aan Julia Domna,’ *Lampas* 30 (1997): 74-86.

<sup>182</sup> A. Billault, ‘The Rhetoric of a “Divine Man”: Apollonius of Tyana as Critic of Oratory and as Orator According to Philostratus,’ *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 26:3 (1993): 228; 223.



These distinctly different, but nevertheless interrelated arguments distinguishing between the philosopher, the sophist, and the philosopher-sophist suggest the prominence of making this distinction as a rhetorical tool, and criticism among and surrounding the ‘Sophistic circle’ often depends upon the choice of definition.<sup>183</sup> In the discussion that follows, it will emerge that much of Lucian’s satire of the sophist derives from the definitions found in Plato, suggesting that rhetoric is a ‘corruption’ of philosophy in its desire for wealth over truth. Where Philostratus may view the influence of philosophy as a corrupting figure for the eminence of sophistry, the Platonic dialogues view the hybrid sophist as a corruption of philosophy. It is argued, therefore, that Lucian adopts the position of Plato in his dialogues in relation to the status of the philosopher-sophist hybrid.<sup>184</sup> His so-called sham philosophers become the representation of the corrupted mixture, wherein the introduction of sophistry has created an imbalance, and taken the reins from the nobility of philosophy.

In light of this, it is useful to examine the theme of the corrupted hybrid in Plato’s *Sophist*, where the negative characteristics which Lucian would later ascribe to contemporary philosophers are already present. Plato’s sophist is a mixture (*Pol.* 291a), but an unnatural, corrupted one. The sophist represents an unbalanced combination of rhetoric and philosophy, and is a γόνις, one who goes to great lengths to appear to have attained an equal balance. It is argued that Lucian utilises the *Sale of Lives*<sup>185</sup> and *The Fisherman* to echo features of the sophist that the Stranger provides, recasting the definitions and thus further diminishing the perceived or promoted value of the sophist.

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<sup>183</sup> N. Gachallová, ‘Rhetoric and Philosophy in the Age of the Second Sophistic. Real Conflict or Fight for Controversy?’, *Graeco-Latina Brunensia* 20:1 (2015): 19-32)

<sup>184</sup> It is worth noting too, that a similar distinction is made by Dio Chrysostom in his effort to distance himself from the sophists. Although initially aligning himself with the sophists, following his exile, Dio comes to embody the ideals of a philosopher (E. Berry, ‘Dio Chrysostom the Moral Philosopher’ *Greece and Rome* 30:1 (1983) 70-80). Such a distinction is, of course, also noted by Philostratus in his *VS*, when he includes Dio as one of those “philosophers with the reputation of being a sophist” (*VS*. 479ff.) Synesius, writing some centuries after Dio himself, details this ‘conversion’ from sophistry to philosophy, verifies such a transformation, framing his perception of the educational ideal around Dio’s own philosophical period of existence (*Syn. Dio*). As will be discussed in further detail below, many of Dio’s speeches reflect this change in perspective; Moles describes Dio’s “sophist-bashing” as “one of his favourite intellectual pastimes” (J. Moles, ‘Fourth Kingship Oration of Dio Chrysostom’ *Classical Antiquity* 2:2 (1983): 271). See too J. Moles, ‘The Career and Conversion of Dio Chrysostom’ *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 98 (1978): 79-100, for a detailed analysis of Dio’s own recognition of his ‘conversion’ throughout his works.

<sup>185</sup> For the purposes of clarification, it is worth noting that I concur with Harmon that Lucian is *not* presenting individual philosophers for sale in this dialogue, but rather representatives of a particular philosophy. This also aligns with the argument Lucian himself presents in the ‘sequel’, *The Fisherman*. (Lucian, *Volume II*, edited by A.M. Harmon, Loeb Classical Library 54 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 1915) 449.)

The purveyors of imitated knowledge that dominate the *Sophist*, are evoked in Lucian's depiction of the contemporary philosophers, framing them as a corrupted mixture of the sophist and philosopher.

### *Plato's Sophist*

For Plato's Eleatic Stranger, the sophist is "not the easiest thing in the world to catch and define," and he consequently proposes the hunting of an easier target to facilitate catching the sophistic prey (Pl. *Sph.* 218c-d). The stranger chooses first to catch and define the fisherman, serving to set up the process by which he will later define the sophist. The mode of definition, used elsewhere in Plato too (namely the *Statesman*, the 'sequel' dialogue), divides various arts and concepts into their two primary parts, categorising the art increasingly narrowly until reaching the desired target.<sup>186</sup> Both the sophist (in one of its many definitions) and the fisherman are initially defined as products of the acquisitive art, in particular that which hunts living beings in a coercive manner. However, where the fisherman specialises in the hunting of water animals, the sophist hunts those which reside on the land, specifically the tame animal (human beings). The stranger explains that the tame animal is hunted by the sophist through the process of private persuasion, coming to name the process under the banner of flattery (221c-223b).

There is a simple parallel to be drawn here, between Plato's likening of the sophist to a fisherman, and Lucian's own use of the character of a fisherman. As is discussed below, the fisherman and the sophist are alike in that they are hunters, which is a definition that Lucian manipulates. Lucian's dialogue the *Fisherman* features this motif of the hunter, yet rather than hunting water animals, Lucian's fisherman has upgraded to catching land animals, the philosopher-sophists. These land animals are similarly hunted through the means of private persuasion, being lured however not by knowledge, but through the promise of wealth. In both Plato and Lucian's dialogues, the promise of wisdom proves to be useless in catching a philosopher-sophist hybrid.

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<sup>186</sup> "In the opening and concluding passages (I.) an attempt is made to form a definite conception of the genus Sophist by the method of dichotomies, i.e. through logical divisions to follow the ramifications of the tree of knowledge till the particular branch which supports him is discovered." (*The Sophistes and Politicus of Plato, With a Revised Text and English Notes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1867) xlvii).

What's more, the shift of the hybrid being lured through persuasion is emphasised in Lucian, by transforming these false philosophers into fish that merely appear to be in the correct guise.

Returning to Plato, the sophist may also be defined as a purveyor of goods in a voluntary manner, through the means of public retail. The Eleatic Stranger explains that the soul, when sold through the means of a travelling salesman, may be exchanged through either the art of display or the art of trafficking knowledge. The sophist is defined by his capacity to sell his goods (in this case, the knowledge of *virtue*) to the consumer, and importantly he does so for a price (223c – 224d). Lucian adopts, but manipulates Plato's definition of the sophist in his satirical dialogues. In his *Sale of Lives*, Lucian's philosophers are portrayed as sophists on account of their commercial sale, and rather than being the purveyors of goods (in the form of knowledge), are made into commodities. The relative values placed upon each of these philosophies should not be ignored, as it is crucial to consider on what basis these values have been determined. The 'knowledge' that the philosophies offer is only offered for the right price, reflecting the sophistic trait of desiring wealth over any true promise of truth, recalling Plato's criticism of the sophist who treats truth as something to be bought and sold.

The Eleatic Stranger's third means of 'catching' the sophist returns to the coercive art, and retains the notion of exchange of goods for wealth. Rather than pursuing the category of hunting, this sophist derives from the act of fighting, specifically that of aggression through the means of words. Verbal controversy, states the Stranger, results in either the wastage of money through excess chatter or the making of money through sophistry (224e-226a). Once again, it is hardly a stretch to see this notion being adopted by Lucian. Wisdom is bought and sold, and the value of the wisdom in question is determined by the sophists' ability to commodify their art (or rather, themselves) through the power of words. It is possible to see this feature of the sophist materialise in the *Sale of Lives*, as Lucian depicts the philosopher-sophists as doing precisely this. Each of the philosophical schools up for sale is given the opportunity to 'sell' itself to the prospective buyer; the Pythagorean is required to express to his potential buyer precisely what he is able to teach, and justify why such teachings are to the buyer's advantage. At the conclusion of the sale of the Pythagorean school, the buyer states

aptly that he “*appears*<sup>187</sup> to be a god and not a mortal” (φαίνομαι; *Vit. Auct.* 6), suggesting that there exists an element of pretence in the Pythagorean’s self-representation.

The Pythagorean is not the only philosophical school that makes attempts to ‘sell’ itself to the prospective buyer – the Cynic follows suit, detailing the way in which the doctrine would benefit the buyer by offering him the shortcut to fame. The representative of a doctrine that vehemently disdains the accruing of wealth and luxury, uses the coercive art of words in order to twist the buyer into aligning with the philosophy – even the lower classes of people, the Cynic states, would be able to evoke wonder in those around him, through the power of the philosophical doctrine. (*Vit. Auct.* 9ff).<sup>188</sup> In these two particular instances, Lucian portrays not only the notion of buying wisdom, but also the means by which these pseudo-philosophers may further their reputation: through the coercive art.

In addition, the sophist is defined in relation to the purification of the soul, as a figure in need of purification from ignorance through Socratic cross-examination – the interrogator being our newly defined Sophist (226c-230b). The sophist, states the Stranger, can purify the obstructive opinions that **those-who-think-they-know hold** – the epitome of ignorance (230a-230d). For the remainder of the dialogue, the two interlocutors explore the final definition of the hard-to-catch sophist, expanding upon the nature of their education. The variety of definitions that the pair have formulated in their discussion has revealed not that the sophist is doubly ignorant, as he merely seems (once again, φαίνομαι) to be knowledgeable about many things.

The sophist, as has been established, ‘hunts’ the tamed animal, exchanging their goods, in the form of knowledge, for monetary gain. “Is it possible,” asks the Stranger, “for a man to know all things?” (233a) The inquiry is met with a resounding “no”, creating something of a predicament for the bold claims of the sophist. The knowledge of the sophist (now redefined as ‘opinion’) is not considered true knowledge. The sophist becomes an “imitator of realities” and a conjurer, merely presenting an appearance of knowledge (235a). The sophist as a conjurer comes to be defined as an “image-maker

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<sup>187</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>188</sup> The Cynic’s words do prove to be ineffective, as the buyer is not convinced, only begrudgingly taking him not for his philosophical benefits, but for his capacity to conduct tasks around the house.

of the fantastic,” an individual who conjures up the appearance of being wise, but is in fact not at all wise. The sophist undertakes mimesis without knowledge of that which he imitates (267b), not replicating scientific inquiry, but merely opinion. Just as the popular orator becomes a paltry imitation of the actual statesman, the sophist takes his place below the philosopher proper. “We cannot very well call him philosopher, since by our hypothesis he is ignorant; but since he is an imitator of the philosopher, he will evidently have a name derived from his” (268c). Through these definitions of the sophist, the assertion from the Stranger in Plato’s *Statesman* comes to hold true. The sophist is “of mixed race” (291a) in relation to the varying means by which he can be categorised. The sophist is neither a philosopher nor a rhetorician, but a combination of both; he uses words and argumentation, but in order to make money; he has knowledge of all things, but only in appearance.<sup>189</sup> The sophist represents a corrupted hybrid, wherein the balance of two disparate forms has become mismatched, quite separate from the envisaged ideal of the philosopher-rhetorician.<sup>190</sup>

Plato, in the *Phaedrus*, depicts a balanced, natural and uncorrupted hybrid form of philosophy-rhetoric, through the metaphor of the charioteer myth. However, as espoused in the *Gorgias*, rhetoric is a danger to the soul on its own. The characteristics of rhetoric come to align with the characteristics of the sophist – the rhetorician succeeds through the art of flattery, persuading the audience (Plt. *Gorg.* 452E) with the appearance of promoting wisdom and virtue, yet merely promoting a belief in the rhetorician himself (*Gorg.* 455A). The sophist, depicted as the Gorgian rhetorician, is result of the base horse taking an increased role over the care for the soul. Socrates systematically undermines the supposed virtue of the rhetorician’s art of persuasion, by and large asserting that persuasion over learning merely furthers false claims to knowledge, both on behalf of the speaker and the audience (*Gorg.* 160A ff). The noble horse can no longer efficiently control the nature of the base horse, and the concerns of philosophy are secondary to the **appearance** of wisdom. The ideal hybrid of the philosopher-sophist has been corrupted, and there no longer remains a balance between the two arts. This absence of balance reflects precisely the corrupted hybrid that features throughout his works. The sophist is like a centaur not only because by definition it is

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<sup>189</sup> In the prologue of Philostratus’ *Lives of the Sophists*, he justifies the sophistic claim to knowledge through by noting the similarities between divine prophecy and the act of sophistry (*VS.* 1).

<sup>190</sup> It is important to note that this above overview does not claim to be comprehensive, but rather intends to outline some of the core features of Plato’s *Sophist* that Lucian utilises.

elusively complex, but also as this complexity serves to neither bolster nor encourage a desire for true wisdom. Like Socrates in his critique of Gorgias, Lucian uses the inherent hybridity of the sophist to his advantage, systematically pulling apart the false claims to wisdom, and uncovering false knowledge behind the sophists persuasive art.

The sophist, as Plato had stated in the *Statesman*, is of mixed race, and this characteristic arguably continues until Lucian's time. The sophist, the hybrid, the blend, remains corrupted, allowing the base nature to succeed over the noble. As we will see in the remainder of the chapter, Lucian embraces the metaphor of the hybrid to great effect. The quintessential hybrid (centaur) is an important feature of Lucian's *Zeuxis*, curiously removed from what may be considered their base nature. However our sophists, in Lucian's similes, are portrayed as the real hybrids, when he likens their sympotic celebrations to those of the Lapiths and the Centaurs. Through an engagement with the texts of Plato, Lucian utilises the notion of the hybrid animal in order to criticise and re-evaluate the contemporary sophists.

### *How much for a philosopher?*

In defence of his *Sale of Lives*, Lucian composed *The Dead come to Life, or the Fisherman*, in which he places himself on trial. Lucian aims to preserve his own literary existence in the face of recently revived philosophical representatives of those philosophical doctrines he so 'wrongly' insulted. Lucian, in his guise as Παρρησιάδης, the 'Outspoken One', makes a defence of this charge which is enough to make even Truth and Virtue blush; it is not these *genuine* philosophers that are up for sale, but the new hybrid philosopher-sophists that give Philosophy herself a bad name. But how are these 'sham philosophers' defective? In both of these dialogues, Lucian emphasises the diminishing of philosophical learning, attributing this to society's concentration upon monetary value and wealth. Despite their teachings, states Parrhesiades, the contemporary philosophers "teach these very doctrines for pay, and worship the rich, and are agog after money," (*Pisc.* 31) and in the *Sale of Lives*, each doctrine has its price. With this emphasis upon money in mind, it is useful to return to the original *Sale of Lives*, prior to discussing Lucian's presentation of philosophical doctrine in *The Fisherman*. The pretense of the philosopher-sophist that underpins Plato's definition of the sophist comes to be reflected clearly in these two dialogues, as Lucian dissects the

sophists' self-representation and exposes them as frauds; treating their so-called wisdom overtly as a commodity reveals the insincerity of their philosophical position.

Lucian's *Sale of Lives* features the systematic auctioning of ten philosophical schools. While not all of these doctrines are sold, or even assigned a monetary value, their advantages or disadvantages are presented to the buyer in a manner not unlike the hawking of a second-hand car. Running the auction are Zeus and Hermes, the latter pronouncing that they will offer "philosophies of every shape and all manner of various inclinations" (*Vit. Auct.* 1). It is significant that Lucian includes the prices that the representative of each philosophical school is sold for; as Bragues notes in the context of a consumer market, high prices act "as signals of quality and badges of distinction," acting as an indication to the consumer of the 'perceived quality' of the given product.<sup>191</sup> As discussed above, the dialogue also engages with notions of the sophists' fixation upon their own philosophical reputation, going to great lengths to sell themselves to the prospective buyer. The association with monetary value and to reputation exemplifies the contemporary philosophers' distance from attaining true wisdom.

By viewing the *Sale of Lives* in the context of Lucian's preoccupation with hybridity and the engagement with the Aesopic, the dialogue encourages a reassessment of philosophical worth, and proposes something of an inverse scale of value. Aesop, being sold for the lowest price in the *Life* becomes the epitome of true wisdom, suggesting that monetary value is not synonymous with intellectual value. Lucian's *Sale of Lives* adopts a similar inverse scale and displays the philosophical doctrines as if they are slaves in the marketplace. The philosopher-sophists have merely the appearance of worth, becoming a hybrid creature dedicated neither to wisdom nor to ignorance. In what follows, the Lucianic presentation of this hybridity acts as a contrast to his own hybridity, through the highlighting the pseudo-philosophers' inability to attain the value of a successful hybrid.

First off the block is the Pythagorean philosophy, which is characterised by the prohibition of bean eating, the doctrine of transmigration, Pythagorean silence, the golden thigh, and the mathematical theorem of a perfect triangle (*Vit. Auct.* 3-6). The

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<sup>191</sup> G. Bragues, 'The Market for Philosophers: An Interpretation of Lucian's Satire on Philosophy,' *The Independent Review* 9:2 (2004): 242. See too M. P. F. Pinheiro, 'Lucian's Satire or Philosophy on Sale' *Archai* 15 (2015): 71 -79.

Pythagorean philosopher is sold to the man with the south Italian drawl<sup>192</sup> for the comparatively low price of ten minas.

Following the sale of Pythagoras, Hermes presents the Cynic doctrine, decorated in the customary Cynic garb; he is the dirty one, complete with the Cynic wallet and unclothed arms. For a mere two obols, the Cynic offers a free philosophy; one unconstrained by wealth, pain, “modesty, decency and moderation” (*Vit. Auct.* 10). In adopting the Cynic lifestyle, the buyer is offered the easy life, “for you will not need education and doctrine and drivel, but this road is a short cut to fame” (*Vit. Auct.* 11). If the price of this Cynic philosopher does indeed denote the perceived quality of the philosophy for sale, we could deduce from its low price that it is a philosophy of little worth.<sup>193</sup> This lack of worth attributed to the Cynic philosophy is denoted by the sale itself: the buyer does not part with his two obols for the privilege of the philosophy, but Cynic will perhaps be an adequate “boatman or gardener.” The buyer only agrees to buy the Cynic on the promise of his low price, and for the capacity for the philosopher to be utilised in a slave context. The sale of the Cynic acts as something of a solidification of the Aesopic connection. While the Cynic philosophy receives its fair share of critique from Lucian throughout the satires, it is nevertheless evident that it is treated with far less disdain, aligning with the philosophical views of his predecessor, Menippus. With the Cynic philosophy not only being sold for a small cost, and the emphasis upon its worth as a slave, the philosophy is portrayed as the most likely path in which to gain wisdom, based on Lucian’s application of an inverse scale.

In a stark contrast, the bedraggled Cynic is followed by a Cyrenaic representative, defined by his hedonistic mannerisms and delight in luxury. Despite being labelled as both the sweetest and thrice happiest of lives, the Cyrenaic cannot be sold - the prospective buyer is not fit (ἐπιτήδειος) to buy such a merry (ἰλαρόν) life.

Hermes and Zeus then offer up a two-for-one special, as the Democritean and the Heraclitean are to be sold ἄμα...αὐτῶ (*Vit. Auct.* 13). These two, like the Cyrenaic, go unsold; the laughing Democritean is too insolent for the buyer's tastes, while the weeping Heraclitean is simply too mad.

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<sup>192</sup> Hermes states that the buyer lives "in the neighbourhood of Croton and Tarentum and the Greek settlements in that corner of the world," referring to the area in which there flourished a group dedicated to the teachings of Pythagoras (*Vit. Auct.* 6.21-24. See too Porph. *Vit. Pyth.* 18).

<sup>193</sup> G. Bragues, ‘The Market for Philosophers,’ 243.



Following this brief interlude, the Socratic philosopher is put up on the blocks, eventually coming to be the most expensive of the philosophers at two talents. The Socratic philosopher claims he is a παιδευαστής, and is wise about ἐρωτικά - a clear allusion to Plato's *Symposium* - yet the buyer is also offered a Platonic manner of life, modelled on various arguments throughout *The Republic*.<sup>194</sup> The buyer is convinced by the Platonic/Socratic life, and it is revealed that he is the tyrant Dion of Syracuse,<sup>195</sup> student of Plato himself.

Following the lengthy sale of the Socratic life, Hermes brings out the Epicurean, the μαθητής of the drunkard (Cyrenaic) and the laughing one (Democritus) (*Vit. Auct.* 19). The sale of the Epicurean<sup>196</sup> follows an unconventional structure; the philosophy is bought, and it is after the sale has concluded that the buyer queries his newly-bought philosophy and even then only regarding its representative's favourite foods.

Conversely, the antepenultimate philosopher for sale is the Stoic, who receives extensive questioning from the buyer. The Stoic, as Schlapbach observes, adopts the common presentation of the Stoic philosopher speaking in riddles,<sup>197</sup> as he appears consistently to baffle the buyer by entangling him in webs of words (*Vit. Auct.* 22). The Stoic is sold for a modest twelve minas, by a group of strong-shouldered men, whom Hermes claims to be worthy for the θερίζων (The Reaper).<sup>198</sup>

The Peripatetic is next up for sale, sold for twenty minas, and finally, the unapprehending Sceptic takes the block, sold for a single mina who in true sceptic style, cannot say with any certainty that he has indeed been bought.

In each of these sales, the representatives of each philosophy are asked to 'sell' themselves to the prospective buyer. As discussed above, they coerce and persuade the buyer to view them as beneficial to their striving to virtue, and as shown in the sequel dialogue, this pretense of wisdom turns out to be truly unfounded.

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<sup>194</sup> The Socratic philosopher states that he "dwell[s] in a city that I created for myself, using an imported constitution and enacting statutes of my own" (*Vit. Auct.* 17).

<sup>195</sup> The only time we get an identity of the buyer.

<sup>196</sup> For a discussion of Lucian's relationship to the Epicurean doctrine, see D. Ogden, 'The Love of Wisdom and the Love of Lies: The Philosophers and Philosophical Voices of Lucian's *Philopseudes*' in *Ancient Narrative 10: Philosophical Presences in the Ancient Novel*, edited by J. R. Morgan and M. Jones (Groningen: Barkuis, 2007) 177-204.

<sup>197</sup> K. Schlapbach, 'The *logoi* of Philosophers in Lucian of Samosata' *Classical Antiquity* 29:2 (2010): 254.

<sup>198</sup> G. Seel, *Ammonius and the Seabattle: Texts, Commentary and Essays* (Berlin/New York: Peripatoi, 2001) 22; V. Marko, 'Some Sketchy Notes on the Reaper Argument' *Organon* 19:3 (2012): 361-387.

The dialogue, wherein philosophies are presented as commodities, provides a crucial basis from which to assess the presentation of philosophical ideals present in other Lucianic works. The relative values placed upon each of these philosophies should not be ignored, given the means by which these values have been determined. On opposite ends of the market, the Cynic is worth a mere two obols, while the Socratic philosopher brings in two talents. The monetary value attributed to these philosophies comes to reflect less what their actual worth is, and more what their perceived worth is. The shift towards prioritising financial value over philosophical value is precisely the problem of contemporary philosophy. The philosopher-sophist is idealised by the masses by focusing so much on their own self-representation in favour of attaining genuine wisdom, and the masses are persuaded by their skills in rhetoric to hold belief in the wisdom that they themselves hold and offer. Lucian's critique addresses the invalid nature of such a perception, revealing in the sequel dialogue that such value is unfounded. The *Sale of Lives* manipulates the old platitude that something is only worth what one is willing to pay for it, emphasising the lack of value for money that the contemporary philosopher-sophists offer.

This inverse scale of value that Lucian utilises in the *Sale of Lives* is similarly presented in the *Life of Aesop*. The seemingly 'worthless' slave, in the guise of Aesop, plays the part of the clever slave. He triumphs over his master with true philosophical wisdom, while the so-called wise man as evidenced through Xanthos, is shown to merely be a sham philosopher, being of no philosophical value and concerned only with reputation.<sup>199</sup> By manipulating this trope in the context of contemporary philosophers, Lucian engages with the social aspects of the Aesopic tradition. The philosophies are treated and sold as slaves, and are the embodiment of the contemporary notion of providing wisdom in exchange for money. They are portrayed as slaves to their own wanton greed, only proclaiming to offer wisdom.

At this point, it is useful to return to our sequel dialogue, *The Fisherman*, for its criticism of using philosophy as a source of income. The contemporary, false philosophers “teach these very doctrines for pay” (*Pisc.* 31), and it is this aspect of the philosopher-sophists that comes to reflect the respective prices that each philosophy is

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<sup>199</sup> See S. Jedrkiewicz, 'Targeting the Intellectuals' in *Philosophy and the Ancient Novel*, edited by M.P.F. Pinheiro, S. Montiglio (Eelde: Barkhuis, 2015) 65-80.

sold for in *Sale of Lives*. Consequently, we may be able to view this companion dialogue as not only a criticism of the sham philosophers' act of charging for philosophical doctrines, but also a criticism of society's *acceptance* of it.

In the *Fisherman*, the character of Plato states that in response to Lucian's *Sale of Lives*, he, along with Chrysippus, Epicurus, Aristotle, Pythagoras, Diogenes and ἅπαντες ὁπόσους διέσυρες ἐν τοῖς λόγοις, has returned from Hades so that they might get vengeance. The protagonist, in defense of his abuse of philosophy (*Pisc.* 4), claims that he was not maltreating the philosophers of the past, but the contemporary philosophers, those who do not seek the truth but merely seek δόξα (*Pisc.* 29-37).

The philosophers, not wishing to appear unprofessional<sup>200</sup>, agree to give Parrhesiades a fair trial before condemning him to death. Rather than Plato and his “elegance and literary distinction,” Diogenes the Cynic is chosen to speak as prosecutor since he is fond of cross-examination and skilled in judicial oratory. Diogenes thus proceeds to catalogue the charges the wronged philosophers bring against Parrhesiades; his abuse of the philosophers and Philosophy herself and in particular his own meagre appointed value. “This most altogether wicked man” (ὁ παμπονηρότατος οὗτος) not only treated the philosophers as slaves in an auction room but also had the gall to allow the Cynic's sale for only two obols (*Pisc.* 27).

With the philosopher's charges put forth, Parrhesiades makes his own defence speech, stating that he was not criticising the philosophers, but rather defending their honour in light of the new philosopher-sophists who are focussed on appearing the part, but are not able to understand true philosophy due to their obsession and preoccupation with wealth. The philosophers, along with the personifications of Truth, Philosophy and Virtue instantly rescind their argument; this Parrhesiades should be counted a φίλος, an εὐεργέτης - no longer a most depraved man.

The remainder of the dialogue serves to prove Parrhesiades' point: that the contemporary philosophers were guided not by the virtues of philosophical doctrines, but the pursuit of wealth. These philosopher-sophists are encouraged to congregate upon the Acropolis so as to present *their* defence, and thus Parrhesiades is tasked with

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<sup>200</sup> Parrhesiades cautions Plato's accusations, lest he begins to act in the manner of the contemporary philosophers, being “ungrateful and hasty and inconsiderate toward a benefactor” (*Pisc.* 5). Such a sentiment is repeated further in the dialogue; Parrhesiades expresses surprise that such anger (ὀργή) erupts from these esteemed philosophers, as, he says condescendingly, it seemed to him that they were beyond such things (*Pisc.* 8).

summoning the philosophers in the way that seems best to him, and he thus promises to give two minas to all those with a large beard (*Pisc.* 41).<sup>201</sup> As the philosopher-sophists flock to the Acropolis, the quarrelling of the philosophers is heard, as they argue about who among them should receive their prize of two minas first. In a reference to Parrhesiades' prior quotation of Homer,<sup>202</sup> the Platonist queries where the δύο τάλαντα are: the same value that he was sold for during the auction in *Sale of Lives*.

In these two dialogues, philosophical doctrine is given a monetary value. In the *Sale of Lives*, philosophies are sold to willing buyers for a set price, and in *The Fisherman*, the greedy philosophers are bought by the interlocutors to their own demise. The philosopher-sophists are subsequently informed by Philosophy of her intention in luring them to the Areopagus with the promise of gold; she herself, Virtue and Truth will distinguish the false from the genuine, with the false philosophers being promised a wretched end to their wretched lives. Unsurprisingly, the sham philosophers flee at this proposition. Parrediades' subsequent actions motivates the text's title, as he takes a fishing rod with gold as the lure, settles down to catch the fleeing hybrids.

Lucian's use of hybridity in this context becomes clearer through analysis of the last half of the dialogue. It has been established that Lucian considers the philosopher-sophists as being incapable of engaging in philosophical discourse with the correct motivations, and this perception derives primarily from their desire to merely *appear* to be philosophers. Lucian draws upon this in order to formulate his critique, presenting the philosopher-sophists in their true guise. These hybrid animals are not only caught like fish, they *are* fish,<sup>203</sup> representing various characteristics of philosophical schools

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<sup>201</sup> The detail of the beard, one that is repeated throughout Lucian's dialogues (*JTr.* 16; *Gall.* 10; *Par.* 50; *Tim.* 54; *Philops.* 23; *D. Mort.* 10), holds especial significance for the following discussion. The bearded philosopher, notes Gleason, is representative of the individual's capacity for teaching philosophy, a notion that is challenged in Lucian's *Eunuch*. Where Diocles claims that the beard is an essential trait for one endeavouring to teach philosophy, the Eunuch (Bagaos) proves his capacity for such despite not having the 'correct' appearance (M. Gleason, *Making Men* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995) 133-35). See too P. Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates: The Image of the Intellectual in Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) 198-266.

<sup>202</sup> "And in the midst lay two talents of gold, to be given to him who so among them should utter the most righteous judgment" κεῖτο δ' ἄρ' ἐν μέσσοισι δύο χρυσοῖο τάλαντα, τῷ δόμεν ὅς μετὰ τοῖσι δίκην ἰθύντατα εἴποι. (*Pisc.* 41; *Il.* 18.507-8;)  
The lines refer to the contest between Odysseus and Ajax over Achilles' armour.

<sup>203</sup> A. Georgiadou, D.H.J. Larmour, 'Lucian's "Verae Historiae" as Philosophical Parody,' *Hermes* 126:3 (1998): 318. It is also possible to see here an allusion to Plato's angler metaphor, as outlined above.

through particular physical characteristics.<sup>204</sup> The Stoics are found in sheer mass, “alike in colour, spiny and rough-skinned, harder to grasp than sea-urchins,” (Luc. *Pisc.* 51) while the Aristotelian fish appears with golden stripes along its back.<sup>205</sup> The fish that looks like a *πλατύς* of course becomes indicative of the Platonic school,<sup>206</sup> and the Cynic appears upon the line as, unsurprisingly, a dog-fish.<sup>207</sup> On the appearance of each, the representatives of the philosophical doctrines question the correct course of action; has Parrhesiades caught a genuine philosopher or merely a pretender? Diogenes, Plato, Aristotle and Chrysippus are unanimous in their judgement; these fish, caught on account of their lust after gold, have nothing in common with them, and thus, they should be thrown off the cliff for their shameful pretence.

It is clear that the philosopher-sophists have not achieved successful hybridity, as the of their merging of philosophy and sophistry has not become a superior form to the two separate components. By transforming the philosopher-sophists into fish that can be lured and caught, Lucian highlights the absurdity of their hybridity as philosophers who are only concerned for financial gain. In these two dialogues, the philosopher-sophists can be identified as hybrids through recognition of their inherently dual nature. As Plato outlined, sophists are not easy to define, as they are both elusive and complicated. Their hybridity is reflected in the way in which they have combined rhetoric and philosophy, however this is to be viewed as a corrupted form of hybridity due to the way in which rhetoric has taken the reigns over wisdom. Lucian aims to further this hybridity, turning them into more literal hybrid forms. Given that they merely appear to be philosophers, corrupting the mantle of philosophical pursuits, Lucian transforms the contemporary philosophers into more overt hybrids; in *Sale of Lives*, the philosopher-sophists are intellectual slaves, and in the *Fisherman*, we see them portrayed as fish, who represent the corrupting capacity of greed. In what follows, I will explore one of Lucian’s further engagements with the notion of hybridity. In the

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<sup>204</sup> The many and varied characteristics of fish as being used to represent more human qualities is not limited to Lucian. As Kneebone discusses, Oppian in his *Halieutica* explicitly indicates the anthropomorphic manner in which he describes them (E. Kneebone, ‘The Poetics of Knowledge in Oppian’s *Halieutica*’ *Ramus* 37: 1 and 2 (2008) 34).

<sup>205</sup> Lucian describes the fish as “ποικίλον τὴν χροάν.”

<sup>206</sup> Aelian lists the mullet as a *κέφαλος*, and has a ‘sharp snout’ (τοῦ ὀξέος προσώπου) The mullet is caught by luring the female – making the male mullets chase after her with lust (1.12). The use of *ψηττα* in Lucian’s description of this fish is often associated with gluttony, as evidenced in Plato’s symposium (*Symp.* 191d) Aelian also describes a ‘harper fish,’ which is flat like a *πλατύς*, gold with black lines or purple with gold lines, a variegated head (11.23).

<sup>207</sup> See Athenaeus, 7.294d and Aelian, 1.55 for other references to the ‘dog-fish’.

second half of this chapter, it is shown that Lucian hybridises the philosopher-sophists even further. While Plato identified the sophist as being of ‘mixed race,’ in two more of Lucian’s dialogues, *Zeuxis* and *Symposium*, it is possible to identify the way in which Lucian transforms the sophists into very literal hybrids, in this case, as centaurs.

### **Centaurs at the Symposium<sup>208</sup>**

Philostratus’ *Lives of the Sophists*, depicts the ‘philosopher-sophist’ to be distinguished from the real sophist; they are not explicitly classed as a hybrid of form, however are certainly ranked in a different class from the proper sophists (*V.S.* 1,484). This insinuation of hybridity is also a feature of the *Life of Apollonius*; Billault notes that despite Apollonius’ positioning of rhetoric as lesser than philosophy, Philostratus nonetheless portrays the ‘divine man’ as a hybrid figure, an intermediary not only between divinity and humanity, but also between sophistry and philosophy.<sup>209</sup>

In these two instances, the hybrid philosopher-sophist hardly suggests any element of corruption. The apparent philosopher-sophist himself however,<sup>210</sup> Dio Chrysostom, certainly embraces such a notion. In Dio’s Fourth Discourse on Kingship, he relates the meeting of Alexander the Great with the Cynic philosopher Diogenes of Sinope. Following a lengthy discussion regarding Alexander’s aspirations to be a true king, Diogenes outlines the three primary types of ‘lives’ that mankind often lead (*D. Chrys.* 4,83). Of importance for the following discussion is the third ‘life’, ‘spirit’, or ‘character’,<sup>211</sup> which Diogenes names the ‘ambitious’ (*D. Chrys.* 4,116 ff.; φιλότιμον). The ambitious spirit, states Diogenes, is concerned first and foremost with their own reputation. Those who are imbued with this spirit, he states, should be likened to Ixion, the hero who is attributed with being the father of Kentauros (*Apoll. E.* 1,20), the turning of the wheel acting as a metaphor for the ambitious spirit’s proclivity towards flattery (*D. Chrys.* 4,123). The likeness to Ixion goes further, as the ambitious spirit is said to

<sup>208</sup> An earlier version of this section appeared in *Ancient Narrative* 15.

<sup>209</sup> A. Billault, ‘The Rhetoric of a “Divine Man”: Apollonius of Tyana as Critic of Oratory and as Orator According to Philostratus,’ *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 26: 3 (1993): 238; 234; Billault, A. ‘Le Personnage de Philostrate dans la Vie d’Apollonios de Tyana: Autoportrait de l’Auteur en Biographie,’ in *L’invention de l’autobiographie d’Hsiode à Saint Augustin*, edited by M-F. Baslez, P. Hoffman and L. Pernot, (Paris: Presses de l’École Normale Supérieure, 1993), 274.

<sup>210</sup> Philostratus includes Dio of Prusa as one of the aforementioned philosophers with the reputation of being a sophist, but not a sophist proper (*V.S.* 1,485).

<sup>211</sup> J. Moles, ‘The Date and Purpose of the Fourth Kingship Oration of Dio Chrysostom’ *Classical Antiquity* 2: 2 (1983) 258.

be completely charmed and blind-sighted by Delusion, not unlike Ixion's own inability to perceive that he had chosen the reputation of believing he had slept with Hera over being able to perceive the reality. This act, states Diogenes, of being charmed by Delusion, can produce "nothing useful or serviceable...but only strange irrational creations that resemble the centaurs" (D. Chrys. 4.131). These strange irrational creations he states, are now, not the actual hybrid beasts, but the "political acts of certain demagogues and the treatises of sophists" (D. Chrys. 4.131).

It is hardly a stretch to understand Dio's oration to be a direct critique of the hybrid and unnatural manner of the philosopher-sophists.<sup>212</sup> Consequently, it is clear that hybridity, in the Second Sophistic more broadly, plays a particular role in acting as a metaphor for a corrupted, or unnatural construct. With this in mind, it is useful to turn directly to the works of Lucian, as it is here that the metaphor of the hybrid becomes more elaborate.

In Lucian's *Fugitivi*, the sophist is not unlike the Centaur: a hybrid creature, incapable of being wholly dedicated to philosophy or to ignorance, wandering in the interspace between an impersonator and a philosopher (Luc. *Fug.* 10). This motif of the hybrid, plays a particular role throughout the works of Lucian. For the purposes of the following discussion, however, I consider how Lucian utilises the notion of the hybrid *animal*, in this case, centaurs, to comment upon the nature of contemporaneous philosophers. With reference to two dialogues, *Zeuxis* and the *Symposium*, it becomes clear that Lucian's works, in addition to using the hybrid as a metaphor for corruption, may also stand as a metaphor for an improved and more effective form. The first of these presents the hybrid form as something worthy of praise, provided the melding of two disparate forms is done in a way that is seamless and aesthetically pleasing.<sup>213</sup> The successful hybrid is evident in the *Zeuxis*, wherein Lucian describes a painting of a family of centaurs. Yet significantly this stands in direct contrast to the presentation of the corrupted hybrid, featured in Lucian's *Symposium*. Here, as in the *Fisherman*, the

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<sup>212</sup> As Moles notes that in this oration, instances of what he terms "sophist-bashing" appear quite frequently throughout the text (D. Chrys. 4.27-39; J.L. Moles, 'Fourth Kingship Oration of Dio Chrysostom,' 271).

<sup>213</sup> P. von Möllendorff, 'Camels, Celts and Centaurs: Lucian's Aesthetic Concept – The *Charis* of the Hybrid', in *Desultoria Scientia: Genre in Apuleius' Metamorphoses and Related Texts* edited by R.R. Nauta, (Wilsele: Peeters-Leuven, 2006) 63-86.

philosopher-sophist is shown to be a corrupted hybrid, responsible for the corruption of contemporary philosophy.

Lucian thus presents two distinct incarnations of the hybrid. In the first instance, the hybrid centaur is portrayed in a positive light, representing a source of wisdom reminiscent of Chiron.<sup>214</sup> In contrast, the supposedly learned philosopher-sophist comes to embody the traditional characteristics of the monstrous hybrid: he is uncivilised, immoral and corrupted.

### *Lucianic Hybrids*

As alluded to above, the hybrid makes an appearance in Lucian's discussion of his own creations, as the combination of dialogue and comedy, he admits, is not unlike the Egyptian camel – half black, half white, and wholly monstrous in its hybrid form (*Prom. Es.* 4-5).<sup>215</sup> In mixing the two literary genres, he states, he has diminished the beauty of each, becoming the epitome of the disharmonious Lucianic hybrid.<sup>216</sup> Yet the hybrid animal appears in a number of different forms throughout Lucian's works. In his *Gallus*, the hybrid animal appears not as a centaur, but as a speaking rooster, and when Menippus adopts wings so as to fly to the heavens in the *Icaromenippus*, he too becomes a hybrid creature, capable of inhabiting both the human world and the heavens. The hybrid animal also makes an appearance in his *Verae Historiae*, with the main character encountering all sorts of hybrid creatures throughout his journey across the skies (*V.H.* 1.11ff.). For the following discussion however, the focus is upon the explicit use of the hybrid as a metaphor for corrupted philosophers. As noted above, this comparison of the philosopher-sophist to a centaur makes an appearance in his *Fugitivi* (*Fug.* 10), particularly as an attack against the Cynic doctrine. The Cynics appear to be philosophers in "deportment, glance and gait," (*Fug.* 4), yet in truth they are ignorant and insulting to the name of philosophy. Such a feature of the hybrid philosopher-sophist also makes an appearance in Lucian's *Peregrinus*. Here, Lucian

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<sup>214</sup> E. Fantham, 'Chiron: The Best of Teachers' in *Literature, Art, History: Studies on Classical Antiquity and Tradition – In Honour of W.J. Henderson* edited by A.F. Basson and W.J. Dominik (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2003) 111-122.

<sup>215</sup> For a detailed analysis of Lucian's use and manipulation of the Promethean tradition, and its relationship to the hybrid genre, see K. ní Mheallaigh, *Reading Fiction with Lucian*, 2-8.

<sup>216</sup> The definition and examination of the ideal Lucianic hybrid is discussed in greater detail below.



utilises the metaphor of the hybrid to critique the Cynic-turned-Christian Peregrinus, who is not discredited so much for his philosophical doctrine, but the manner in which he conducts himself, as he is concerned only with his reputation.<sup>217</sup>

The hybrid in Lucian, therefore, plays an important, but malleable role. It is an extremely serviceable literary tool for satire. In order to observe this, I focus upon the hybrid centaur, as not only does it represent the epitome of a corrupted mixture, but it also comes to represent the pinnacle of hybrid success.

### *Centaurs*

In Lucian's *Symposium, or the Lapiths*, the hybrid philosopher-sophists become likened to centaurs, with Lucian modelling the dialogue upon the mythological centauromachy. Lucian transforms the quarrelsome nature of the philosophers into a very literal brawling match, to the extent that 'you would have said they were Lapiths and Centaurs' (Luc. *Symp.* 46). This depiction of the philosopher as emulating the violent centaur, is curious when taken in consideration of the *actual* centaurs, found in his *Zeuxis*. Here, the hybrid animal is shown in the context of an idyllic family unit, a stark contrast to their philosopher counterparts.

In Lucian's *Zeuxis*, the family of centaurs become humanised, with the emphasis being upon the civilised aspects of the inherently hybrid creature. However this is an unusual depiction of the hybrid creature, which is distinct from the violent, savage centaur that is dominant throughout classical literature,<sup>218</sup> as is evident in Book 12 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Here, Ovid offers perhaps the most well-known re-telling of the famous battle between the Centaurs and the Lapiths. The marriage of Pirithous and Hippodame calls for celebration, leading the newlyweds to invite the race of centaurs as guests. The centaurs, having grown 'heated with wine or lust or both of them together' (Ov. *Met.* 12. 22-23) reveal their wild nature, seizing the female guests and thus triggering the battle. Nestor, in his guise as narrator of the battle, reminds the reader that the violence takes place during a dinner party: "All utensils meant for

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<sup>217</sup> J. König, *Greek Literature in the Roman Empire* (London: Bristol Classical Press 2009) 247.

<sup>218</sup> For a detailed discussion of the wild nature of the centaur, see J. Bremmer, 'Greek Demons of the Wilderness: The Case of the Centaurs' in *Wilderness in Mythology and Religion: Approaching Religious Spatialities, Cosmologies, and Ideas of Wild Nature*, edited by L. Feldt. (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2012) 25-54.

feasting were used for war and murder” (Ov. *Met.* 12.243-244). It is this detail, as will be shown, which becomes crucial for Lucian’s comparison of this narrative with that depicted in his *Symposium*. Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* also depicts skulls being crushed by tableware, eyes being pierced, boulders being thrown, the bodies of Lapiths and Centaurs alike being maimed and mutilated (Ov. *Met.* 12. 221ff). This violent and evocative language, is replicated in Lucian’s account, with the philosophers of the *Symposium* acting as if engaged in a pub brawl.<sup>219</sup>

However in addition to this extreme violence, there exists a depiction of the race of centaurs that comes to mimic more accurately that which is found in Lucian’s *Zeuxis*. As DeBrohun discusses, in the context of the *Metamorphoses*, the violent episode is interrupted by a short description of a centaur couple, Cyllarus and Hylonome, who, upon entering the battle, are almost immediately struck down. Their description is dominated by an emphasis upon the beauty of the two centaurs’ forms; the hybrid animal is a harmonious combination of horse and man, and he exists as a perfect example of such a beast,<sup>220</sup> with Nestor’s account praising both the horse and human halves of Cyllarus equally (*Met.* 12.393ff.) There is no indication of the violent demeanor that is exhibited by the other centaur guests, and none of the wild savagery that would traditionally accompany such an animal.<sup>221</sup> Instead, Ovid provides the reader with quite a contradictory image of two centaurs in love.

It is also significant that we are offered a depiction of the female centaur, which is strikingly absent from many depictions of centaurs.<sup>222</sup> This absence of female centaurs is noted by Philostratus in his *Imagines*, where he states that despite the belief that either the ‘race of centaurs sprang from trees and rocks,’ (Phil. *Im.* 3.3) or that they came into being simply from the male centaur, a more plausible explanation would be

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<sup>219</sup> For a discussion of the place of the Centauromachy within the context of both Book 12 and the *Metamorphoses* as a whole, particularly its relationship to the Homeric epics, see N. Zumwalt, ‘Fama Subversa: Theme and Structure in Ovid “Metamorphoses”’ 12, *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 10 (1977): 209-222 and M.W. Musgrove, ‘Nestor’s Centauromachy and the Deceptive Voice of Poetic Memory (Ovid *Me.* 12.182-535) *Classical Philology* 93 (1998): 223-231.

<sup>220</sup> J.B. DeBrohun, ‘Centaurs in Love and War’ 426-427.

<sup>221</sup> J.B. DeBrohun, ‘Centaurs in Love and War’ 430.

<sup>222</sup> Lucretius (*Lucr.* 5.922), as DeBrohun notes, does not even deign to give mention of female centaurs, as even male centaurs are unfathomable (DeBrohun 2004, ‘Centaurs in Love and War,’ 445). This is not to say that the impression of a female centaur is unique to Ovid; as will be discussed, it is the presence of the female centaur in Lucian’s *Zeuxis* and in the *Metamorphoses* that encourages a reading of Lucian’s use of centaurs as manipulating the trope of the hybrid.

a belief in the existence of female centaurs. The female centaur, as we will also see in Lucian, is inherently distinct from the traditional portrayal of the male centaur. For Philostratus, the female is elegant in form when merged with the horse, and likened to the appearance of the Amazons (and if one were to remove the horse part, Naiads) (Phil. *Im.* 3.3). This is quite different from the non-human violence exhibited during the centauromachy. Similarly for Ovid, while the female centaur is described as being among the race of hybrids, (*semiferos*; Ov. *Met.* 12. 406), it is her human qualities that are the focus. As DeBrohun outlines, there is a likeness between the actions of the female centaur and the instructions offered women in Ovid's own *Ars Amatoria*, to the extent that her equine features are barely mentioned, and if they are, it is as evidence of feminine, *human*, preening.<sup>223</sup> The female centaur in particular, as she appears in Ovid and Philostratus, is herself a more humanised 'version' of the traditionally savage centaur. As will be shown through Lucian's *Zeuxis*, such humanising can also occur in similar measure for the male counterpart.

This tension between the savage and the civilised centaur is particularly important for the following argument, as it is possible to view a similar tension between Lucian's two works. Chiron, the famously just and moral centaur, exemplifies the connection between civilised behavior and *paideia*. As the teacher of Achilles, he stands in direct contrast to the philosophers of Lucian's *Symposium*. Unlike contemporary philosophers, the idealised, civilised centaur can embody an ideal of philosophical education.

Consequently, the hybrid animal becomes significant for understanding the role of philosophy in Lucian's works, for as will be shown, it is the philosophers who come to take on the traditional role of the non-human centaur. The philosophers in Lucian's *Symposium* are evaluated against the precedent set in Plato's *Symposium*, as the juxtaposition of the ideal philosopher against the corrupted sophist reveals Lucian's particular use of this familiar literary tradition to evoke hybridity of form and function. For Lucian, it is the centaur-like sophists who are savage and violent, while the centaur retains its humanity.

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<sup>223</sup> J.B. DeBrohun, 'Centaur in Love and War' 435-438. 'And she was dainty, if such creatures could be, combing her hair, *or mane*, twining her locks with rosemary, or violets, or roses, or sometimes white lilies' (Ov. *Met.* 12,407-410). Emphasis added.

Lucian's *Zeuxis* presents a humanised, even civilised centaur, like that which appeared more briefly in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Lucian's monologue consists of two parts, both addressing the notion of receiving praise that does not identify the real strengths of a work of art. The first part portrays the painter Zeuxis as scornful of his artwork being applauded for its novelty rather than its skilful composition, and it is this section that will be the focus for the following discussion, as the painting of Zeuxis depicts a family of centaurs. These centaurs, not unlike those depicted in the middle of Ovid's *Centauiromachia*, are detached from their traditional nature. They are removed from the savage centauromachy, and instead are situated in an idyllic, bucolic setting.

In this painting of a family of centaurs, the female feeds her two young, while the male stoops over (ἐπικύπτει) the mother and her foals, dangling a lion cub above the children and playfully scaring them. Despite his laughter, states the narrator, the male centaur is entirely beast-like, savage, and wild. However the centaurs, as will be discussed, embody features of both the human and the horse equally, creating a hybrid pleasing to the eye. Despite the inherent savagery of the centaur, the depiction epitomises the successful hybrid creature.

von Möllendorff, in his discussion of the hybrid animal in Lucian's works, identifies the features of the successful hybrid. A combination, he states, of two καλοί does not guarantee a beautiful hybrid, but rather the successful Lucianic hybrid must offer:

The artful presentation of natural liveliness and movement, the avoidance of abrupt contrasts and exaggerated and undifferentiated uniformity, the creation of colourful variety and at the same time the skillful achievement of the effects of symmetry, well-balanced structure and disposition, an impression of serenity and placid buoyancy instead of distorted effects, *but at the same time the attempt to join together that which is disparate*.<sup>224</sup>

The successful hybrid must appear to be *natural*, as indicated in Lucian's *Prometheus*. It should not be some kind of monstrosity like the half-black, half-white man (*Prom.*

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<sup>224</sup> P. von. Möllendorff, 'Camels, Celts and Centaurs,' 72. Emphasis added.

*Es.* 4),<sup>225</sup> who represents the way in which a melding of two disparate things can achieve nothing of this ‘well-balanced structure and disposition.’<sup>226</sup> Curiously, in Lucian’s *Prometheus*, it is in fact the centaurs that become the epitome of the disharmonious hybrid, as they are represented in paintings as drunks and murderers (*Prom. Es.* 5). This is, however, the precise opposite of our narrator’s description of Zeuxis’ piece, in three primary ways.

First, the centaurs of *Zeuxis* do, in fact, align with the Lucianic perception of a successful hybrid. The artist has displayed:

Precision of line, and accuracy in the blending of colours, well-suited application of the paint, correct use of shadow, good perspective, proportion, and symmetry (*Zeux.* 5).

Additionally, the female centaur is described as having the human and equine parts of her joined perfectly – there is no ‘abrupt transition’, nor is it obvious to the viewer that there has been a joining of two separate halves (*Zeux.* 6). Lucian’s commentary upon Zeuxis’ skill in composing the painting is, in and of itself, a unique aspect of his ekphrasis. As Pretzler notes, ekphrases throughout ancient literature tend to focus far more emphatically upon the content of a work of art, rather than the composition.<sup>227</sup> This choice to focus upon the τέχνη of the painting, she argues, accentuates that the artist has managed to make the unnatural natural,<sup>228</sup> becoming representative of the true, uncorrupted hybrid animal.<sup>229</sup>

Secondly, there is nothing of the savagery that is exhibited in the *Prometheus*. Unlike Ovid, Lucian does not avoid the female centaur’s equine features, but both the horse and the human aspects are treated in an equal and balanced manner. The human features act in a human way, while the equine half of her is treated as though a horse, with the two coexisting harmoniously. This is perhaps most evident when she is described as feeding her foals:

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<sup>225</sup> The half-black, half-white human appears too in Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius*, though to a different purpose (*Phil. V.A.* 3.3).

<sup>226</sup> P. von. Möllendorff, ‘Camels, Celts and Centaurs,’ 75.

<sup>227</sup> M. Pretzler, ‘Form Over Substance? Deconstructing Ekphrasis in Lucian’s *Zeuxis* and *Eikones*,’ in *A Lucian for Our Times*, edited by A. Barkley (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009) 160-61.

<sup>228</sup> M. Pretzler, ‘Form over Substance?’ 167.

<sup>229</sup> This is true too, of Lucian’s own use of the centaur as a metaphor for his own hybrid literary creation in his *Prometheus* (K. ní Mheallaigh *Reading Fiction with Lucian*, 3-5).

She holds one of her offspring aloft in her arms, giving it the breast  
in human fashion; the other the suckles in a horse-like manner  
(*Zeux.* 4).

Additionally, both parts are things of beauty; the equine part of her is καλλίστη, not unlike the horses of Thessaly, and her human half is likened to a very beautiful woman, despite having the ears of a satyr.<sup>230</sup> The foals themselves are not entirely free from potential savagery; their childhood is described as wild and fearsome, but they are nevertheless quite harmless.

Finally, it should not be ignored that the wild nature of the *male* centaur is not wholly suppressed, as he is described as being ‘completely frightening and absolutely wild’ (*Zeux.* 5) with a beast-like (θηριώδης) glance. However as von Möllendorff notes, the horse half of the centaur is quite literally hidden from view, as he is ‘not completely visible, but only to a point halfway down his horse body’ (*Zeux.* 4).<sup>231</sup> While he retains the inherent savagery of the centaur, this is not indicated through his equine features, but through his human form.<sup>232</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear that he frightens his young with the lion cub in jest, as is indicated by his laughter at the introduction and the conclusion of his description (*Zeux.* 4; 5).<sup>233</sup> This potentially wild creature is softened through his interaction with his family,<sup>234</sup> and while the savagery is not entirely removed from the male centaur, he is nevertheless humanised.

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<sup>230</sup> Here, we can recall Philostratus’ description of the female centaur, which also identifies particular features that contribute to the appearance of the centaur (*Phil. Im.* 3.3).

<sup>231</sup> P. von Möllendorff, ‘Camels, Celts and Centaurs,’ 77.

<sup>232</sup> M. Pretzler, ‘Form over Substance?’ 167.

<sup>233</sup> P. von Möllendorff, ‘Camels, Celts and Centaurs,’ 77.

<sup>234</sup> The depiction of the male centaur in this dialogue refelects upon the naturalness of parental love for offspring. Lucretius proposes that parental love is a natural response, arguing from clear animal examples: the mother of a sacrificial calf presents symptoms of bereavement, and the nurturing of offspring is a natural phenomenon due to the requirement of milk for the young (*Lucr. De Rerum Natura* 2,349ff.) There has been some discussion in recent scholarship of the philosophical implications of attributing the capacity for parental love to animals. McConnell notes that Lucretius’ position is curiously contradictory to Epicurus. McConnell argues that Lucretius’ manipulation of Epicurean doctrine allows for humans and animals to be attributed parental love by nature, as it is in the context of civilised and domesticated existence (S. McConnell, ‘Lucretius on parental love’ conference presentation, The Australasian Society for Classical Studies 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Melbourne University, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2016). If the *civilised* human experiences natural parental love, the attribution of parental love to a traditionally *uncivilised* hybrid arguably further humanises the figure of the centaur. For additional instances of parental love as natural to all animals, see Philostratus’ *VA.* 2,14.

There indeed exists a similarity between the depiction in *Zeuxis* and that found in the midst of Ovid's re-telling of the battle between the centaurs and the Lapiths. Not only is there a diminishing of the traditional centaur-like savagery, but there is in both instances a humanising element. The centaurs, for Ovid, fall in love just as the Lapith bride and bridegroom do, and in *Zeuxis*, there is the depiction of a close-knit, human-like family unit.

The centaurs of Lucian's *Zeuxis* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are of course not unique in being made civilised. Famously Chiron, as the teacher of Achilles, adopts the epithet 'most just of the centaurs' throughout the literary tradition (esp. *Il.* 11.832; δικάϊότατος Κενταύρων), and as Fantham notes, Ovid's *Fasti* humanises this civilised centaur in a similar manner to the depiction in the *Metamorphoses*, through an omission of any equine features.<sup>235</sup> Chiron, as a humanised centaur, is a figure who represents a learned hybrid and acts as a contrast to the traditional depiction of the centaur. Chiron is predominantly characterised by his morality and role as pedagogue,<sup>236</sup> yet he is also inherently a character with a dual literary function, having a savage and uncivilised appearance which belies his real nature. This is significant when juxtaposed with Lucian's depiction of both centaurs and philosophers, as the centaurs of *Zeuxis* may be viewed as being humanised. In direct contrast, the so-called civilised philosophers are shown to adopt the characteristics of the uncivilised centaur, an inferior incarnation of the 'most just' Chiron.

The ekphrastic description of the family of centaurs stands in a stark contrast to the usual image of the violent, savage creature. By composing a work that in essence humanises the hybrid, Lucian portrays the means by which hybridity, when done skillfully, can indeed become a thing of beauty. It is not unreasonable to interpret such a position as being in some ways self-reflexive, inciting a reconsideration of his assertions that his works are centaur-like in their mixing. ní Mheallaigh rightly notes that this dual depiction, in both *Prometheus* and *Zeuxis*, of centaurs and their hybridity enforces the admiration of the skill and novelty of his own hybrid genre.<sup>237</sup> However for the following discussion, the focus is not on the means by which the hybrid is an exercise in reflexivity, but rather as a tool to critique the unsuccessful, and corrupted

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<sup>235</sup> E. Fantham, 'Chiron: The Best of Teachers' 116-117.

<sup>236</sup> M. Gisley-Huwiler, 'Cheiron' in: L. Kahil, *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* III: 1 (LIMC) (Zürich-München: Artemis Verlag, 1986) 237.

<sup>237</sup> K. ní Mheallaigh, *Reading Fiction with Lucian*, ' 3

hybrid. In viewing the centaurs of the *Zeuxis* as a positive representation of hybridity, it is thus important to consider the hybrid form in the context of more negative depictions of centaurs. Keeping the imagery of Ovid's *Centauiromachy* in mind, the 'centaurs' of Lucian's *Symposium* can be contextualised in this framework.

### *Symposium*

Lucian's *Symposium, or the Lapiths*, is composed as a reworking of his Cynic alter-ego Menippus' dialogue (*Ath.* 14.629F). While Menippus' work is now lost, Lucian's dialogue consists of a re-telling of a wedding feast celebrating the marriage of Cleanthis and Chaereas. Lycinus recalls the various guests at the dinner, namely 'philosophers and literary men' (*Symp.* 6), and the reader is introduced to representatives from various philosophical schools: a pair of Stoics (Zenothemis and Diphilus) a Peripatetic (Cleodemus), an Epicurean (Hermon), and a Platonist (Ion).<sup>238</sup> As soon as the guests take their seats, the opposing philosophical schools begin to quarrel, bickering amongst themselves and talking behind each other's backs (*Symp.* 9-12). In the midst of the dinner, an additional philosopher appears, a Cynic, by the name of Alcidamas, who causes a stir among the guests, then reclines with a drink, 'just as Herakles in the cave of Pholus is represented by the painters' (*Symp.* 14).

This mythic allusion, in addition to the dialogue's subtitle and setting, encourages readers to see these philosophers as centaur-like. The myth of Heracles and Pholus, relates that the centaur was hosting the hero during his search for the Erymanthian boar. However, when the wine jar was opened at Herakles' request, a number of other centaurs rushed to Pholus' cave, so wild and savage that in Herakles' defence of himself, the centaurs fled to the cave of Chiron, resulting in Chiron's eventual death (*Apoll.* 2.83-87). Lycinus' likening of Alcidamas to Herakles in a cave of centaurs acts as a clear allusion to events that will follow: as the wine is passed throughout the wedding feast, the philosophers become enraged, not unlike the centaurs of myth.

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<sup>238</sup> See too Lucian's *Philopseudes*: those present at the house of Eucrates are Cleodemus the Peripatetic, Deinomachus the Stoic and Ion, representing Plato, which suggests that the names hold some significance (*Philops.* 6). The dialogue also mimics the *Symposium* in a similar way to the *Lapiths* – instead of Alcibiades/Alcidamas, *Philopseudes* features Arignotus as the late arrival (*Philops.* 29; I. Männlein 'What Can Go Wrong at a Dinner Party: The Unmasking of False Philosophers in Lucian's *Symposium or the Lapiths*,' in *Double Standards in the Ancient and Medieval World*, edited by K. Pollmann (Göttingen: Duehrkohp und Radicke, 2000) 248).



It is necessary too, to explore the other namesake of the dialogue: Plato's *Symposium*. Lucian's *Symposium* structures itself in a similar manner to Plato's, by setting up the dialogue as a re-telling of the sympotic event. The attendees of Plato's *Symposium* are likewise made up of philosophers, however unlike Lucian's fictional guests, Plato takes his characters from contemporary figures; those present at the dinner include Agathon, Aristophanes, Pausanias, Alcibiades and, of course, Socrates. Lucian also utilises the trope of a late arrival,<sup>239</sup> which appears in Plato's *Symposium* in the drunken arrival of Alcibiades (Pl. *Symp.* 212D). Yet for Lucian, this trope is expressed in three separate instances: not only is there Alcidamas' arrival (12), but there is also the arrival of the doctor, Dionicus, and the arrival of the Stoic Hetoemocles' slave. It is this last arrival that incites the commotion, with the slave giving a public address on behalf of his master. The address primarily attacks the host Aristenaetus for not inviting Hetoemocles, and praises the Stoic life over the opposing philosophical schools. Unsurprisingly, such a claim provokes a retort from Cleodemus (the Peripatetic), inciting the verbal argument that leads to the fighting. Enraged by the address, Cleodemus unmask the famous Stoic founders, Chrysippus, Cleanthes and Zeno, as frauds, stating that they "make wretched little phrases and interrogations, philosophers in form, but most of them are like Hetoemocles" (*Symp.* 30).

These Stoic philosophers are not, according to Cleodemus, real philosophers, and by striking the instigators of the philosophical doctrine, Cleodemus simultaneously ambushes other members of the school. Zenothemis defends his philosophical leaders, hurling insults back at the Peripatetic and the Epicurean until finally, boiling with rage, he overturns his cup of wine onto his opponents, inciting a brawl.

It is here that we receive a brief digression by the narrator, who comments upon his thoughts as he was watching the brawl take place. Lycinus expresses confusion as to the benefits of education, stating that these supposedly educated men are caught up in their own teachings, having regard for nothing else (*Symp.* 34). He is amazed that:

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<sup>239</sup> D.E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 280; I. Männlein, 'What Can Go Wrong at a Dinner-Party, 248).

Though so many philosophers were present, there really was not one to be seen who was devoid of fault, but some acted disgracefully and some talked still more disgracefully (*Symp.* 34).

These philosophers, in both their words and actions, have become a source of disrepute for the race of philosophers more broadly. These learned men abuse each other, gorge themselves and brawl, while the so-called ‘unlettered folk’ laugh and observe. It is in this context that it is possible to view the particular hybridity of the dinner party that is facilitated by the elite and non-elite environment of Imperial Rome. ní Mheallaigh notes the way in which Lucianic hybridity frequently draws upon the distinctions between low and high cultures, allowing for a literary hybrid between the elite and non-elite.<sup>240</sup> In the context of the *Symposium*, a similar hybridity is also expressed, and in particular the distinction between the elite and the non-elite cultures may be identified through the overt mentions of wealth and reputation. The elitism of the symposium is shown even prior to retelling the violent feast, as the narrator Lycinus notes that the groom of the marriage is not only studying philosophy, but he is also descended from a very wealthy family (*Symp.* 5). While his wealth does not prevent the groom from being a student of philosophy,<sup>241</sup> there is nevertheless an immediate tension between guests and the wedding party in terms of this elite and non-elite dichotomy. What is more, as the guests begin to seat themselves at the feast, Lycinus also relates that there exists a clear hierarchy between them, with each entering the symposium according to their reputation (*Symp.* 9). Over the course of the party, their hybridity comes to show itself in more overt forms; while this is mainly represented through their devolution into centaur-like behaviour, prior to this, the educated elite, namely the grammarian, is shown to be combining the verses of various poets, arguably standing as an allusion to Lucian’s own literary hybrid, and its position within such an environment (*Symp.* 17). The intention here is to frame the remainder of the dialogue around this notion of hybridity. The hybridity that exudes itself in this mixture of elite and non-elite cultures and genres allows to solidify the critique of the philosopher sophists. Our hybrid narrator, himself situated between the elite and the popular cultures of the *Symposium* (*Symp.* 9), serves to reflect upon the two types of hybridity that may present themselves

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<sup>240</sup> K. ní Mheallaigh, *Reading Fiction with Lucian*, 17-18.

<sup>241</sup> There is much to be said about the relationship of this dialogue, and others of Lucian, to the doctrine of Cynicism, however discussion of this relationship and its implication is not treated here.

in such an environment. Where the narrator, Lycinus, remains separate from the ‘philosophers and literary men’, the philosopher-sophist hybrids, through their pretensions towards wisdom, are cast as corrupted hybrids, diminishing any of their claims to philosophical learning.

Lycinus, the narrator of Lucian’s *Symposium*, expresses surprise that the sympotic environment no longer offers its participants philosophical wisdom, as it did in the *Symposium* of Plato. Lucian utilises the circumstances of Plato’s *Symposium* to deliberately comment upon the absence of philosophical wisdom in contemporary *symposia*. The symby creating a stark contrast between the two sympotic texts so as to highlight the failure of philosophical education in Lucian’s time.

There are a number of other striking differences between Lucian’s and Plato’s sympotic dialogues. First, the *Symposium* of Plato minimises the presence of both drinking and sympotic entertainment (Pl. *Symp.* 176a ff.), while drinking in the *Lapiths* remains prominent. Shortly after the arrival of Alcidas, Lycinus relates that by then the *kylix* had been passed around the circle constantly (15). Alcidas, soon after, was drunk (ἐπεπώκω 16), and shortly before the evening’s entertainment arrived, Lycinus observes that the rest of the guests were also drunk (17).

Secondly, where Plato’s guests dismiss the dancing flute-girls to be entertained instead by simple conversation, the entertainment of Lucian’s *Symposium* is not only present (in the form of a clown), but strikes blows with the drunken Cynic (19). Similarly, the act of eating during the symposium is brought to excess and greed in Lucian’s interpretation. Lycinus relates the range of dishes available to the guests (11), Alcidas’ rage is shown to be quelled by the sight of an enormous cake (16), and the second episode of brawling comes as a result of some guests receiving a smaller portion of dinner (43). These features of the symposium are taken by Lucian to the farthest extreme. König states that the ‘transgressive potential of eating and drinking, as bodily practices, can undermine elite pretentions,’<sup>242</sup> and such a transgression is quite

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<sup>242</sup> J. König, *Saints and Symposiasts: The Literature of Food and the Symposium in Greco-Roman and Early Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 233-234. Such a sentiment is similarly found in Bakhtin’s discussion of the banquet, wherein he discusses the sympotic setting and its association with eating and drinking as a place where truth may be freely spoken, suggesting a transgressive element to the banquet environment. What’s more, he states, ‘the grotesque symposium does not have to respect hierarchical distinctions; it freely blends the profane and the sacred, the lower and the higher, the spiritual and the material’ (M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, Translated by Hélène Iswolsky, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968) 285-286).

deliberately implemented by Lucian as a means to denigrate the characters of the symposium. Lucian's overt depiction of this transgression, sets up a contrast between the two *symposia* and evokes the inherent hybridity of the sympotic environment. There exists this tension between the act of philosophical discussion and the act of revelry, suggesting that the space in and of itself stands as a hybrid. This hybridity of the symposium is reflected in Xenophanes' description of a symposium, wherein there is the explanation of how to correctly conducting oneself at the symposium, only to then describe the kind of drinking and festivities that should follow as the evening continues (Xen. Fr. 1). Nevertheless, there is also the suggestion that excess, in any form becomes counterintuitive to the overall virtue of the symposium, to the extent that even speaking of such topics such as the centauromachy should be avoided (Xen. Fr. 1).<sup>243</sup> The hybridity of the symposium that is outlined in Xenophanes' text is echoed in Lucian's depiction, yet is naturally taken to the farthest extremes. This depiction of excess beyond what could be considered a successfully hybrid symposium presents precisely Lucian's concerns with contemporary philosophy, and those who practice it.

The contrast with Lucian's *Symposium* and the supposed norm or ideal of the sympotic environment is similarly reflected in Plutarch's *Quaestiones Conviviales*. It is argued by the character Crato that to remove philosophical conversation from the sympotic environment is both foolish and unheard of, to which Plutarch himself adds that it entirely depends on who those present happen to be. If, he states, the guests are fond of learning, then philosophical conversation is expected, however if the company is made up of those who appreciate bird song and music, it is likely to end in disagreement (Plu. *Quaes. Conv.* 613d-f). The appropriateness of the forum for philosophical discussion must be determined by the configuration of the guests: *pretensions* of sophistic discussion in the context of a drinking-party are entirely unsuitable (Plu. *Quaes. Conv.* 614e ff.). It is precisely this notion of a sham philosophical symposium that Lucian draws upon in his satirical dialogue. Rather than positioning the 'philosopher-guests' in a sympotic environment that educates them and improves their lives through philosophical and learned discussion,<sup>244</sup> Lucian's "untrustworthy caricatures of real

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<sup>243</sup> For a more comprehensive discussion of this fragment of Xenophanes, see M. Marovich, 'Xenophanes on Drinking-Parties and Olympic Games,' *Illinois Classical Studies* 3 (1978) 1-26 and C.M. Bowra, 'Xenophanes, Fragment 1' *Classical Philology* 33:4 (1938) 353-367.

<sup>244</sup> J. König, *Saints and Symposiasts*, 30-59; W. Jaeger, *Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture*, (Oxford:

philosophers”<sup>245</sup> undertake the activity more appropriate for those who entirely dismiss philosophy from the sympotic table. Rather than undertaking what may be understood as ‘civilised’ conversation, the guests of Lucian’s *Symposium* not only eat and drink to excess, but find their entertainment in disputing the validity of their opposition’s philosophical doctrines. These philosophers, as Männlein argues, become mere imitators of the philosophical founders whose doctrines they espouse,<sup>246</sup> emulating neither a philosopher nor a rhetorician, but the hybrid sophist, wholly dedicated neither to philosophy nor to ignorance.

### *Centaurs at the Symposium*

As Lucian’s *Symposium* dialogue approaches the final conflict among the warring philosophers, the reader is exposed to the true nature of each philosophical school. The Cynic has not a single ounce of regard for his environment, the Stoics are portrayed as driven by greed, and as each doctrine finally chooses its ‘side’, the violence and savagery that is quintessential to Ovid’s centauromachy is revealed. Lucian’s *Symposium* depicts similar violence to that outlined above: eyes are gouged from their sockets, jaws are broken, women are screaming and crying as the battles rages on. The banquet room is now literally described as a space for two armies to meet (μεταίχμιον), and Lucian even employs an Iliadic quotation as a small bowl is thrown across the room, narrowly missing its target (*Symp.* 44).<sup>247</sup> In the narrator’s near-closing remarks, he states that:

You would have said they were Lapiths and Centaurs, to see tables going over, blood flowing and cups flying (*Symp.* 45).

The philosophers, already proven to be excessive in their eating and drinking, are depicted as uncivilised in their sympotic behaviour and utterly uneducated in philosophy, re-enacting as they do the famous battle of hybrid animals. The correct manner of conducting oneself during a symposium, as outlined by Plato and Plutarch,

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Basil Blackwell, 1945) 213-262.

<sup>245</sup> I. Männlein, ‘What Can Go Wrong at a Dinner Party?’ 248.

<sup>246</sup> I. Männlein, ‘What Can Go Wrong at a Dinner Party?’ 253.

<sup>247</sup> Agamemnon is battling the Trojan Iphidamas, when his spear misses his opponent (*Il.* 11,233).

has fallen by the wayside, and it has become clear that the claims to wisdom of contemporary philosophy are false.

Through the depiction of contemporary philosophers as centaur-like, Lucian's interpretation of the sympotic environment manipulates the notion of philosophy as *paideia* through a recasting of contemporary philosophical conversation as failing to offer its participants' true education. Lucian's sympotic interpretation of the famous centaromachy exhibits a de-humanising, as the philosophers become like the traditional hybrid centaur, exhibiting their bestial nature over any human characteristics.

These two dialogues of Lucian, the *Zeuxis* and the *Symposium*, present the motif of the centaur in two distinctly separate contexts. In the first instance, the nature of the hybrid animal is considered, while in the second Lucian comments upon the failings of contemporary philosophy. The supposedly educated and wise philosophers are cast as savage, hybrid centaurs, while the hybrid animal itself comes to exhibit civilised behaviour. The philosopher as some kind of hybrid animal is not a notion restricted to this particular dialogue, nor to Lucian, but its development here contributes powerfully to Lucian's ongoing satirical polemic against philosophers. The philosophical hybrid, when contrasted with overtly humanised centaurs in the *Zeuxis*, offers a striking role reversal: the centaur approaches a human character, rather than a class of humans being bestialised by taking on the extremes of centaur behaviour. The savagery and the wildness that so defines the centaur breed is all but removed in *Zeuxis*, and instead the reader is left with the impression that the hybrid may not be the abhorrent and repulsive thing that permeates popular understanding. Rather, through the deftness of *Zeuxis*' skill, the hybrid animal is portrayed as a thing of (almost) human beauty.

These two dialogues, when viewed side-by-side, reflect a Lucianic concern with the nature of the contemporary philosopher. While the *Zeuxis* on its own stands as a more considered evaluation of Lucian's own works and their value as a hybrid genre, the work also acts as a consideration of the dichotomy between the elite and the popular. By recognising the disjunct between the perception of the artwork and the artist's intention, notions of perceived value can be understood as being emphasised in this dialogue. The suggestions that the hybrid has value on the basis of novelty offers a reflection upon the way in which elite and non-elite values are proliferated in society – and the way in which such values may be painted simultaneously. With this element of

the *Zeuxis* in mind, it is possible to consider the motif of the centaur in this work as having a more forceful relationship with the centaurs of Lucian's *Symposium*. Here, the value of the philosopher has sunk so low that their elevated position is no longer justified, a clear reflection upon the notions of *perceived* value that is considered in the *Zeuxis*. Despite their supposed education, they act disgracefully. Additionally, where the philosopher in the *Symposium* is symbolically removed from humanity, the hybrid centaur in *Zeuxis* has its humanity emphasised. For Lucian, a successful hybrid 'attempt[s] to join together that which is disparate,' on the proviso that the balance is not disrupted. The philosopher-sophists, for their false professions of wisdom and education, have damaged this balance through their greed, overtaking the centaur as the epitome of the unsuccessful hybrid, while the 'uneducated' simply laugh and pass judgment on those whom they *used* to admire.

In this chapter, I have argued that Lucian further engages with the notion of the hybrid, as a means to critique contemporary philosophers. In Chapter One, it was argued that Lucian engages with the Aesopic tradition so as to ensure his works are able to reach a dual audience. In the above discussion, it is possible to see how this dual audience reaches its full potential, for the way in which Lucian consistently characterises the philosopher-sophists as both hybrid in genre and hybrid in form. Consequently, it is possible to see that Lucian engages with similar concerns to the Aesopic tradition – the works are able to embrace this dual audience that so defines the fable, and the question of the distinct 'values' of the elite and the popular audiences are presented. The presence of the Aesopic tradition in the dialogues discussed is evidenced through the concerted effort to display the tension between elite and non-elite cultures. Lucian reflects upon the ideals and essence of the Aesopic tradition by engaging with the distinctions between low and high culture, and it is through this distinction that it is possible to view the Lucianic critique of the philosopher-sophists on the basis of their pretensions of elite culture.

In the first half of the chapter, I showed that the philosopher-sophists represented a corrupted hybrid, and earned the disdain of even the fathers of their respective doctrines. In so doing, Lucian effectively sets up the basis for his further critique, placing the philosopher-sophists upon an inverse scale of value, and diminishing their worth on account of the corrupted hybridity. In the second half, I showed that such a notion is expanded upon, as not only are the philosopher-sophists

literal hybrids, but they are cast as even more degraded than the most well-known human-animal hybrid, the centaur. The framing of the philosopher in these four dialogues creates a powerful and far-reaching effect, which resonates through a number of other Lucianic dialogues. In *Sale of Lives* and the *Fisherman*, our hybrid philosopher-sophists are portrayed as non-elite, and non-human. They are concerned primarily with their reputation (and will go to great lengths to maintain this), and their single-minded desire for money over any genuine or valuable wisdom serves to create a distinct divide between them and the real philosophers present. For the *Zeuxis* and the *Symposium*, this notion of the philosopher-sophists being non-elite and non-human once again presents itself, although in this instance it is through a direct association with the traditionally savage centaur. The *Symposium* in particular, serves to drive home this critique, as we are offered what is portrayed as a real, unadulterated insight into the donkey beneath the lion's skin. The philosopher-sophists have not truly earned the title of philosopher, and they are indeed a hybrid like the centaur: uneducated, uncivilised, and importantly, unable to slip past Lucian's discerning gaze.



## Chapter Three

### Pythagoras-Rooster

*Indeed, my education in this regard began from the moment I was first put on display. A small group of visitors approached my wagon and after a moment began speaking to me. I was astounded. At the zoo, visitors had talked to one another – never to us.*

Daniel Quinn, *Ishmael: An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit*

From antiquity to the modern day, the trope of the speaking animal has been used for a number of different literary purposes.<sup>248</sup> In the context of modern texts, Lewis Carroll's 1865 classic *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* demonstrates the use of speaking animals to indicate an exploration of a world separate from ours, while George Orwell's *Animal Farm* utilises speaking animals as an oblique commentary upon the concerns with contemporary communism. More recently, the speaking animal may be used as a philosophical teacher, as is evident in Daniel Quinn's *Ishmael*, wherein the gorilla employs his understanding of human language to educate his human interlocutor about the true nature of the universe. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that this trope exists throughout antiquity, and that then too the speaking animal held a number of functions. As discussed in Chapter One, the speaking animal is a core and established feature of the Aesopic fable, and it is the fable's relationship to Golden Age ideals that will similarly be discussed in this chapter. Lucian's dialogue *Gallus* directly engages with the idealised Golden Age through its use of a speaking animal, serving to further his critique of contemporary philosophers through a direct contrast of contemporary and past practice. In *Gallus*, a philosophically-inclined, talking rooster, talks sense into his interlocutor Micyllus, showing to him that greed and desire for wealth and reputation do not equate to a happy, virtuous existence. In what follows, I will first outline in detail the trope of animal speech in antiquity, in both its literary and 'scientific' incarnations. Having established the presence and

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<sup>248</sup> For an outline of the trope throughout literature (entitled Type B21) see S. Thompson, *The Folktale* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946) 489; esp. 279; 276.

malleability of animal speech in antiquity, I will then turn to the use of this trope in Lucian's work.

Beyond the fable, one of the more well-known instances of a speaking animal is found in Homer's *Iliad*, wherein Achilles' horses Balius and Xanthus are granted the power of speech by Hera, in order to reveal their master's fate (*Il.* 9.404).<sup>249</sup> As alluded to earlier, the Aesopic fable primarily presents animals capable of human speech, largely as a reminder of the Greek Golden Age of animal speech.<sup>250</sup> In the realms of ancient comedy, Aristophanes' *Birds*, *Wasps* and *Frogs* in particular feature animals capable of speech, primarily as members of the animal chorus, as a deliberate blurring of the human and animal in an attempt to construct a commentary upon nature and civilisation.<sup>251</sup> This feature of the speaking animal as representative of hybridity is a core concern for the following discussion, for the means by which Lucian explores the presence of successful, or well-proportioned hybrids.

However while the speaking animal in fiction is a frequent feature in both children's and other contemporary literature,<sup>252</sup> the following chapter concentrates on antiquity's concern with animal speech as presented through philosophical discourse. The concern, for many authors, rests upon either determining a justification for imbuing animals with speech or depriving them of the capacity. In the case of the former, the justification relies upon the animal as having previously been a human, and in the latter, there exists an impetus to deny animals speech as evidence of lack of reason.

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<sup>249</sup> Heath does note that the horses are promptly silenced, as Achilles already knows his fate, and thus it is not necessary for the animals to speak such things (J. Heath, *The Talking Greeks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 16).

<sup>250</sup> Speech in the Aesopic fable will be returned to later in the chapter, especially in regards to philosophical criticisms of the contemporary age.

<sup>251</sup> K. S. Rothwell Jr., *Nature, Culture and the Origins of Greek Comedy: A Study of Animal Choruses*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 184. Rothwell also discusses the sympotic associations of the animal chorus, in particular the drunken revelry that would accompany the conclusion of a symposium. The *komos*, Rothwell argues, can be viewed as a precursor to the animal chorus evidenced in Greek comedy, as it embodies many similar features: Dionysus, animals and satyrs, and the act of costuming oneself in order to partake in the *komos* (K.S. Rothwell Jr., *Nature, Culture and the Origins of Greek Comedy*, 6ff). See too Sifakis' discussion of the potential purpose of animal choruses (G.M. Sifakis. *Parabasis and Animal Choruses: A Contribution to the History of Attic Comedy*. (London: Athlone Press, 1971) 78ff.).

<sup>252</sup> C. Dovey, *Only the Animals* (Camberwell: Penguin Books, 2014). C. Elick, *Talking Animals in Children's Fiction: A Critical Study* (Jefferson: McFarland and Company Inc., 2015).

In the following chapter, it will be explored how Lucian utilises the motif of the speaking animal in his *Gallus*. To do so, it is necessary first to explore the philosophical and literary significance of the speaking animal, in particular birds, so as to understand Lucian's particular use of a speaking rooster in his dialogue. As noted above, animals are denied a capacity for speech as evidence for their lack of reason. In the first section of this chapter, it is necessary to trace the development and use of animal speech for literary and philosophical sources. It is shown that Lucian's rooster continues the criticism of the sophists precisely through an engagement with the tradition of animal speech. The rooster in *Gallus* is the reincarnated form of Pythagoras, who teaches his interlocutor not to desire wealth and gold. By imbuing an animal with speech, and positioning this speaking animal as a source of wisdom to the human character, the dialogue places an emphasis upon the distinction between real and false philosophy. In the world of *Gallus*, philosophical teaching has been reduced to being conducted by the sham philosophers, and it is only through an engagement with a real philosopher (in the guise of an animal) that the truth may be attained.

## Speech

It is also important to consider the nature of speech more broadly, as it becomes clear that determining intellect on the basis of speech does not apply only to the human-animal divide. A frequent concern of Greek authors is this notion of determining the nature of the other, often intending to de-humanise others on the basis of non-Greek characteristics. As was shown in the previous chapter, Lucian embraced this notion by utilising the hybrid centaur as a means to show the philosophical other in the context of the fraudulent philosopher sophists. Yet this literary technique far precedes Lucian; Homer's *Odyssey* famously depicts the de-humanised other in Book 9 and its depiction of the Cyclopes. They are lawless, and as the particular interaction with Polyphemus aims to show, they hold no regard for the civilised behaviour expected of a proper Greek (*Od.* 9. 105ff). Yet in what follows, the focus is upon how language is used as means of differentiating real Greeks from the

other.<sup>253</sup> Anson explores this role of language in the contexts of defining ethnicity, drawing upon the work of Hall and Bologna, and argues that language throughout the Greek world plays a crucial role in defining one's personal identity.<sup>254</sup> Speech, he notes, can be divided into various regional categories, though these dialects, he argues, appear not to be a hindrance to understanding among the Greek-speaking communities.<sup>255</sup> Significantly, in his discussion of the role of Greek language, he notes that Herodotus maintains that Greek-ness is so entrenched in the capacity for language that it was possible to relinquish one's foreignness through the adoption of language.<sup>256</sup> Given the way in which culture is linked to language, attributing Greek-ness to one who is able to engage with the Greek language is hardly a foolish undertaking, however in the context of the following discussion, it becomes clear that writers of antiquity nevertheless took great lengths to deny language to those considered foreign. The process of defining something as 'other' on the basis of their capacity for language is crucial for this discussion of Lucian's use of hybridity.<sup>257</sup> The centaur, as shown in the previous chapter, exemplifies the uncivilised other, however it is argued that speech and, importantly one's mastery over speech, similarly serve to undermine or strengthen one's particular inclusive quality. In this context, however, rather than determining

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<sup>253</sup> Heath states that "The Other can and *should* be treated as somethings less than full persons, it has often been argued, because they are *in fact* more irrational, infantile, "soulless" and uncivilised than we are," with language being one of the primary means of distinguishing humans from animals (J. Heath, *The Talking Greeks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 315-18).

<sup>254</sup> E. M. Anson, 'Greek Ethnicity and the Greek Language,' *Glotta* 85 (2009): 5-30. See too, E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2004) 5; C. Bologna, 'Il linguaggio del silenzio: L' alterità linguistica nelle religioni del mondo classico' *Studi Storico Religiosi* 2 (1978): 305-342; L. Kim, 'The Literary Heritage as Language: Atticism and the Second Sophistic' in *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, edited by E. J. Bakker (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell: 2010) 368-482.

<sup>255</sup> E. M. Anson, 'Greek Ethnicity and the Greek Language,' 9. This feature of Greek language, as history shows, has the capacity to play out in a number of ways; while the unification of the Greek language allowed a defeat of the Persians, the distinctively different features of each region also contributed to the divide during the Peloponnesian War, as reflected in Herodotus and Thucydides (Her. 7; Thuc. 7; E.M. Anson, 'Greek Ethnicity and the Greek Language,' 12-16).

<sup>256</sup> E. M. Anson, 'Greek Ethnicity and the Greek Language,' 16. Herodotus speaks of the assimilation of the Pelagians with the Athenian language (Her. 57.2ff).

<sup>257</sup> Goldhill discusses the notion of appearance in the context of Lucian's work, and notes that an important aspect of 'becoming' Greek relates directly to language. If an inability to correctly look Greek evokes scorn from onlookers, the act of speaking poor Greek in the context of oratory is nothing short of an embarrassment (S. Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek?: Contexts in the Cultural History of Hellenism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 84; 89ff.)

‘Greek-ness,’ it is focussed instead upon determining true and valid claims to wisdom.<sup>258</sup>

Determining Greek-ness through speech has, of course, especial significance in the context of the following discussion. Lucian’s own Syrian heritage, and his atticising throughout the majority of his works exemplifies the use of speech and language to enhance a particular perception. The question of Lucian’s true ethnicity has long been the subject of conjecture and debate, and the following makes no attempt to weigh in on this discussion, short of concurring with Richter that Lucian is in many ways a cultural hybrid.<sup>259</sup> The concerted attempts by scholars such as Wieland to characterise Lucian as among the ranks of the pure Greek philosophers is based wholly on the nature and perhaps quality of Lucian’s writings, arguing that many of Lucian’s works *must* have been written in Athens, ultimately “Hellenizing the texts by planting them...in Greek soil.”<sup>260</sup> Despite being Syrian, culturally positioned at the “farthest boundary of Greek culture,”<sup>261</sup> the language of Lucian’s works ultimately serve to remove him from this foreign exclusion,<sup>262</sup> and become considered not as the other, but as representative of Greek ideals and culture.

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<sup>258</sup> It is worth mentioning here briefly that the use of speech as a form of cultural definition within the Greek speaking world often presents itself through the particular modes and terminologies of speech that are applied to women. Given the limited scope of this dissertation, it is not possible to discuss such a distinction in full. However, it is certainly important to note that there exists an inherent hierarchy in language. For more on women’s speech, see J. Mossman, ‘Women’s Speech in Greek Tragedy: The Case of Electra and Clytemnestra in Euripides’ “Electra”’ *The Classical Quarterly* 51:2 (2001): 374-384.

<sup>259</sup> D. Richter, ‘Lives and Afterlives of Lucian of Samosata,’ *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 13:1 (2005): 93.

<sup>260</sup> D. Richter, ‘Lives and Afterlives of Lucian of Samosata’ 83; C.M. Wieland, *Lucians von Samosata Sämtliche Werke aus dem Griechischen übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen und Erläuterungen*. (Leipzig: Weidmanns Erben und Reich, 1788). Elsner too notes the cultural hybridity of Lucian himself, particularly in the context of his *de dea Syria*, wherein we are offered an insight into a cultural amalgamation of the Greek and Syrian pantheon of Gods. Elsner states: “He writes about Syria as if he were an insider – addressing his Greek-speaking audience as if they were outsiders; but he writes in Greek as an insider to the culture of his audience, presenting them with what is in many aspects, a typical (‘Herodotean’) ethnography of the foreign and the marvellous” (J. Elsner, ‘Describing Self in the Language of the Other: Pseudo(?) Lucian at the Temple of Hieropolis’ in *Being Greek Under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and Development of Empire*, edited by S. Goldhill. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 128. 123-153).

<sup>261</sup> August Pauly, *Lucians Werke* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1827), 5: “Sein Geburtsort war Samosata, eine unfern des Euphrat’s an den *aussersten Grenzen griechischer Kultur* gelegen Syrische Stadt, an deren Stelle heut zu Tage ein gänzlich unbedeutender Ort, Semisat, befindlich seyn soll.”

<sup>262</sup> For an analysis of Lucian’s Greek and its atticisms, see W. Schmid, *Der Atticismus in seinem Hauptvertretern von Dionysius von Halikarnass bis auf den zweiten Philostratus*. (Stuttgart: W Kohlhammer, 1887).

Speech and language, therefore, are an important defining quality in both Lucian and antiquity more broadly. In the examples outlined above, language may act as a cultural and ethnic divide, however it may also serve to include an individual or culture within a much broader group. This quality of language is particularly important in the context of the following chapter, as the notion of animal speech is assessed. Animals, throughout antiquity, are frequently denied any capacity for speech on account of their lack of reason, undergoing a similar language distinction to that between the Greek and the other. However as will be shown, Lucian not only engages with this idea of animal speech, but manipulates it in such a way to offer a reflection of the broader function of speech in the ancient world. This is not unlike the manipulation of speech evidenced in the *Life of Aesop*; the character of Aesop manipulates the words and speech of his so-called philosopher master as a means to prove his own worth. We see a form of this in Lucian's *Gallus* dialogue, twisting the perceptions of speech as an indicator of worth. The rooster, being provided with reasoned and comprehensible speech, offers an alternative perspective upon human and animal philosophical capacity. Our hybrid rooster wholly outwits his human interlocutor, and encourages a reflection upon the nature of speech as rhetorical tool. As will be shown, positioning the hybrid, speaking, rooster as a source of wisdom serves to undermine the authority of the contemporary philosopher-sophists, as they are shown up to be little more than imitators of speech.

### *Animal Speech*

*Human* incomprehension of animal speech, according to Porphyry, is an insufficient basis upon which to deny rationality to animals. Foreign dialects and languages are understood by those to whom the speech is accustomed, despite the inability of outsiders to understand them. The same may be said of animal speech: "Understanding," states Porphyry, "comes to them in a way which is peculiar to each species, but we can hear only noise deficient in meaning, because no one who had been taught our language has taught us to translate it into what is said by animals." (Porph. *Abst.* 3.3.5) While Porphyry's work specifically considers the notion of animal speech

in the context of vegetarianism and the rational animal, his assertions on animal language nevertheless provide a framework from which to structure the following discussion.<sup>263</sup> As has been discussed above, the notion of speech, and the capacity for speech is an important consideration throughout antiquity, and denying or attributing speech to beings reveals much about both the author and their subject. Lucian's *Gallus* features a bird with a human voice, who reflects upon and disparages the human desire for wealth and glory. In doing so, it is argued that Lucian evokes the Golden Age of speaking animals and the Aesopic tradition to further facilitate his critique. In positioning the dialogue during the Aesopic Golden Age, there comes to exist a reflection upon contemporary human-animal interaction. More importantly, in this particular context, it is also possible to identify a tension between the high and low culture of philosophical discourse; the rooster does not only criticise human desires, but convinces his human interlocutor of his folly through professions of true wisdom. The lowly rooster is shown in these instances to possess reason, inciting a consideration of this particular dichotomy of low and high in Lucian's time. The members of the low, popular culture are in fact imbued with wisdom, however the supposed learned and elite individuals are shown to be wholly reliant on their reputation, and not their capacity for wisdom.

Porphry's line of argument follows upon (but is by no means the conclusion of) a long-standing attempt to determine the nature and implications of animal speech, and the way in which this comes to affect human perception of animals more broadly. Xenophon succinctly encapsulates the human-animal divide in his *Memorabilia*, where humans are portrayed as distinct from animals on the basis of both their physical capacity and mental comprehension. In the context of speech, he states that humans alone are endowed with the capacity to "articulate the voice"<sup>264</sup> (ἄρθροῦν τὴν φωνήν X. *Mem.* 1.4.12) and furthermore, "in comparison with the other animals, men live like gods" for their superiority of physical form and mental capacity (X. *Mem.* 1.4.14)<sup>265</sup>.

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<sup>263</sup> For a fuller discussion of Porphyry's work, see R. Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, 182ff and Porphyre, *De l'abstinence*, Edited and translated by J. Bouffartigue. (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1977).

<sup>264</sup> E.C. Marchant, *Xenophon: Memorabilia and Oeconomicus* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923) 61.

<sup>265</sup> The hierarchy of animals, humans and gods is a relatively frequent trait throughout antiquity. Such a notion is presented in Plato's *Hippias Major*, wherein Heraclitus is attributed with levelling the relative values of wisdom attributed to these three categories. While in comparison with monkeys (even the most beautiful!), he states, humans are wiser and even more beautiful, however in comparison to the



Xenophon is of course not unique in viewing animals as inferior to humans on the basis of speech; denying them the capacity for language or speech becomes synonymous with denying them reason. The division between humans and animals is also reflected in the Greek language itself; as Kleczkowska outlines, from the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC, ancient authors actively distinguish between man from the other animals, suggesting a distinct shift in human perceptions and relations with animals.<sup>266</sup> In what follows, I will briefly explore the way in which animals are systematically distinguished from humans, and portrayed as wholly inferior beings. Their inability to speak as humans do serves to solidify and justify human superiority over animals, becoming a powerful rhetorical tool in the ancient world.<sup>267</sup> Having established the means by which speech and language are utilised in this context, it is possible to assess the context in which Lucian's own satire is constructed. While the absence of animal speech in Lucian's contemporary world is rationalised through the mythical deprivation following the era of the Golden Age, there is nevertheless a continued attempt to determine the animal's potential capacity to speak and understand human language, and the implications this may have for the broader capacity for reason.<sup>268</sup> Lucian's inclusion of a reasoned,

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gods, the humans are to be likened to monkeys (*Hipp. Maj.* 289a ff). This notion of 'hierarchy' is an important consideration for the overall discussion. Given the relationship of Lucian's satires to dismantling the strict divisions of high and low culture in Second Sophistic society, it becomes extremely useful to view his treatment of this divide in the context of the divine and human spheres. This is treated in extensive detail in chapters 4 and 5, however it is nevertheless important to address this hierarchy here, given the representation of animals as being the 'lower' class.

<sup>266</sup> K. Kleczkowska, 'Those Who Cannot Speak: Animals as Others in Ancient Greek Thought' *Maska* 24 (2014): 98.

<sup>267</sup> Kleczkowska discusses the relationship between human superiority and rhetoric in relation to Isocrates, who portrays the capacity for speech as the foundational means by which humans have been able to achieve and progress (Isoc. *Nicocles of the Cyprians* 3.5-6; K. Kleczkowska, 'Those Who Cannot Speak,' 102). Speech and language serve to identify both the civilised and, consequently, the uncivilised.

<sup>268</sup> It almost goes without saying that such a discussion is also a modern concern, as several studies have been conducted that aim to determine precisely an animal's capacity for speech. While the focus for many of these studies are chimpanzees (R.A. Gardener and B. T. Gardener, 'Teaching Sign Language to a Chimpanzee: A standardized system of gestures provides a means of two-way communication with a chimpanzee,' *Science* 165: 3894 (1969): 664-672; D. Premack, 'Language in a Chimpanzee?' *Science* 172: 3985 (1971): 808-822) and using these animals as a means to understand more about *human* language and communication (M. Frölich; P. Kuchenbuch; G. Müller; B. Fruth; T. Furuichi; R. M. Wittig; S. Pika 'Unpeeling the layers of language: Bonobos and chimpanzees engage in cooperative turn-taking sequences' *Scientific Reports* 6: 255887 (2016) <https://www.nature.com/articles/srep25887>; A. S. Pollick and F. B. M. de Waal 'Ape Gestures and Language Evolution' *PNAS* 104: 19 (2007): 8184-8189), it is nevertheless clear that there exists among humans a desire to communicate (in some way) with animals.

speaking rooster, wittily challenges this notion, and manipulates the nature of speech to frame contemporary philosophical practice as uncivilised.<sup>269</sup>

### *Rejection of Animal Speech*

It is important to provide an overview of the *rejection* of animal language in antiquity, for as will be shown, even if the proponents of animal irrationality at all believed in a bestial capacity for speech in the Golden Age, this capacity was most certainly no longer possible. The Golden Age of fable, of animal speech, is portrayed as being in the distant past, and their deprivation of speech in the current era is a core concern for those who wish to deny animals the capacity for reason.<sup>270</sup> Nevertheless, it is useful to return briefly to the work of Hesiod, as his depiction of the Golden Age offers an insight into early perspectives upon animal speech. While he does not explicitly reject the idea of animals being able to speak to humans, he nevertheless asserts human intellectual superiority<sup>271</sup> over animals in his present day; most famously, Hesiod asserts that animals, in contrast to men, do not possess δίκη (Hes. *OP.* 274). Yet Hesiod does, of course, include talking animals in his narrative by recounting a fable<sup>272</sup> of a hawk and a nightingale, (Hes. *OP.* 202-13) defining the tale as an αἶνος so as to position it well within the world of the mythic past. Lefkowitz's analysis of the short passage provides an important basis from which to consider later positions on animal speech. The nightingale, he argues, sings like human poets in an attempt to be released from the clutches of the hawk. However, the hawk ignores these cries, and the nightingale's "anthropomorphic utterances are thrown back at her as irrelevant animal noises in the

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<sup>269</sup> This connection between comprehensible speech and the civilised is alluded to in Lucian's *Icaromenippus*, wherein Menippus explains to his interlocutor how the philosophers merely quarrelled amongst themselves, speaking about things that caused him even more confusion (ἀπορία; *Icar.* 5).

<sup>270</sup> Of the philosophical doctrines, the Stoics are the more vocal about denying animals the capacity for reason. For a detailed analysis of the Stoic perspective, see R. Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals* and S. Rubarth, 'Animal Perception in Early Stoicism: A Response to Richard Sorabji' *The Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy Newsletter* 456 (1999): 1-9.

<sup>271</sup> Newmyer specifies that Hesiod does not suggest explicitly that humans are superior to animals, but certainly suggests an intellectual superiority on the basis of human faculty for justice. (S. T. Newmyer, 'Being the One and Becoming the Other' 509.)

<sup>272</sup> The Hesiodic fable is discussed at length in Chapter One, however Lefkowitz's discussion of the difficulties in terming Hesiod's αἶνος as a fable should nevertheless be noted. While Hesiod's specific use of the term was undoubtedly intended to refer to animal fables, Lefkowitz emphasises that the translation does not express the layers of meaning that the word may refer. (J.B. Lefkowitz, 'Aesop and Animal Fable' in *Animals in Classical Thought and Life* edited by G.L. Campbell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) 8-9.)

fable itself”.<sup>273</sup> As discussed in Chapter One, Animals, even if they did possess language would not be understood on account of the inherently intellectual, and thus linguistic, divide.<sup>274</sup>

Aristotle’s views of animal speech, in the context of biological inquiry,<sup>275</sup> concede that animals do have a *form* of speech, although this is indeed distinct from human language. He observes that “some emit noise (ψοφητικά), some are mute (ἄφωνα); some have a voice (φωνήεντα) and of the latter, some are articulate (διάλεκτος) and others inarticulate (ἀγράμματος)” (*H.A.* 1.1.488a.33). Speech (διάλεκτος), sound and voice are for Aristotle distinct concepts (*H.A.* 4.9.535a.29) yet even if an animal has the physical capacity for these, they are nevertheless excluded from employing human language (λόγος),<sup>276</sup> as a consequence of their lack of human reason. What is crucial is that while the sound produced by animals may be in some ways meaningful,<sup>277</sup> it is nevertheless inferior to human language.<sup>278</sup>

This denial of animal speech also features in the context of studies not dedicated to understanding the characteristics of animals, namely rhetoric and political speeches. Denying animals the capacity for speech (and by proxy, the capacity for persuasion through rhetoric) acts a means to enhance the power of rhetoric itself. An animal’s lack of language or speech is also famously illustrated in Aristotle’s *Politics*, stating that man is the only one of the animals who possesses speech (λόγος, *Pol.* 1.1.9; 1.1253a), given that the voice of animals merely derives from instinct, and not through a capacity

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<sup>273</sup> J.B. Lefkowitz, ‘Aesop and Animal Fable’, 10.

<sup>274</sup> The relationship of the fable to Hesiod is discussed in full in Chapter One.

<sup>275</sup> S.T. Newmyer, ‘Being the One and Becoming the Other: Animals in Ancient Philosophical Schools’ in *Animals in Classical Thought and Life*, edited by G.L. Campbell, 507-534. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, 520; R. Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals*, 2.

<sup>276</sup> T. Fögen, ‘Animal Communication’ in G. L. Campbell, *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) 220.

<sup>277</sup> R. Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals*, 80-81.

<sup>278</sup> It is useful to compare this Aristotelian view with the Stoic doctrine. Animals, according to the Stoics, are unable to develop their part of the soul that drives behaviour, and thus actions are described as impulses, removed from rational thought (S.T. Newmyer, ‘Speaking of Beasts: The Stoics and Plutarch on Animal Reason and the Modern Case Against Animals’ in *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 63:3 (1999): 102.). These impulses are said to be responsible for the sound that animals make, thus distinguishing animal utterances from human language (R. Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals*, 81). Diogenes Laertius states in his *Life of Zeno* on the Stoic theory of speech that “while the voice or cry of an animal is just a percussion of air brought about by natural impulse, man’s voice in articulate and, as Diogenes puts it, an utterance of reason, having the quality of coming to maturity at the age of fourteen.” (D.L. 7.55) For the Stoics, animals do not make any meaningful sounds, which is attributed to their intellectual inferiority. The authoritative part of the soul in animals is not as well developed as in humans, and thus human language, despite their *physical* capacity for speech, cannot be attained (T. Fögen, ‘Animal Communication’, 222).

to distinguish right from wrong. In a similar context, Cicero also proclaims humans' superiority over animals wholly on account of their capacity for speech, simultaneously emphasising that those who are able to speak *well*, are also superior to other humans (*De. Inv.* 1.4). The distinct divide here, constructed around a human-animal divide complicates the traditional animal-human-divine hierarchy. As Hawkins' aptly summarises:

Animals, since they lack altogether the capacity for language, demarcate one end of a spectrum that leads toward the masters of persuasive speech, and marginal figures like children, women, foreigners, the uneducated, and those with communicative disabilities are mapped somewhere between these extremes. Verbal animals, therefore, represent a category crisis that demands explanation (Fögen 2003, 2007), and by situating speaking animals in the wider range of classical attitudes we can hear a paradoxically eloquent *alogia*.<sup>279</sup>

Animals are portrayed as inferior beings on account of their incapacity for speech, however this inferiority, according to Cicero, may be applied to other members of the human race as well. It is this role of speech that is crucial for the following discussion, as the "marginal figures" in the realms of speech in Lucian's works come to include the contemporary philosopher sophists. Given the nature of Lucian's works, and their relationship to rhetoric and the Second Sophistic, the presence of speech as a tool for denigration of an 'other' becomes a useful means for Lucian himself to discredit the false-speaking philosophers.

As may be evidenced by these attitudes towards the existence or non-existence of animal speech, the notion of language acts as a defining feature of what may be considered human or non-human, as well as distinguishing elite or non-elite. Porphyry was, of course, not alone in his defence of animal reason and animal speech, as can be seen from the many earlier sources which he is able to cite. Plutarch's *Moralia* also

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<sup>279</sup> T. Hawkins, 'Eloquent Alogia: Animal Narrators in Ancient Greek Literature' *Humanities* 6:37 (2017): 1.

asserts the animal capacity for intellectual thought, and the doctrines of transmigration and vegetarianism proposed by Pythagoreans and Platonists had a high cultural profile, and both philosophies stand in defence of animal reason and speech. *Gallus* primarily acts as a parallel to Plutarch's own *Gryllus* dialogue, with the emphasis being on dismissing human desires and arrogance through the medium of an animal interlocutor. Nevertheless, Lucian's use of the speaking animal, when viewed in the context of Golden Age ideals and contemporary discussions of animal speech, comes to reflect a satire of anthropocentrism. The text's suggestion of philosophical contest through the enlightened rooster's teaching of the ignorant human encourages a reflection upon denying speech and rationality to animals, albeit in the context of satire. The Golden Age is evoked in Lucian's *Gallus*, through its portrayal of the speaking animal who returns to the time before this "linguistic break", and offers "immeasurable happiness" to his human interlocutor. The rooster's *capacity* for speech is explained through the fact that he used to be human, yet by using the motif of animal speech to frame a philosophical dialogue, Lucian encourages further reflection on the attribution of language. The notion of animals being able to speak in human language is, to say the least, controversial among the philosophical schools,<sup>280</sup> and its denial serves to highlight the superiority of humans over animals. With this in mind, it is possible to view the dialogue as criticising the contemporary philosophical symposium by manipulating the idea of the philosopher. Micyllus, the rooster's interlocutor, enters a space wherein he must engage with 'real' philosophy in order to understand the truth. With this 'real' philosophy being spoken from the mouth of the rooster, Lucian creates a striking re-evaluation of this human-animal divide. The rooster, in this instance, is recast as a hybrid figure, having the body of a rooster, but the voice of a human. In direct contrast, however, is the foolish and ignorant human. I argue that through this dialogue, Lucian continues to manipulate the notion of hybridity as a means to solidify his critique of the contemporary, hybrid, philosopher-sophists. By portraying a

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<sup>280</sup> A distinct outlier here is, unsurprisingly, the Cynics. The 'dog' philosophy is perhaps most well-known for their rejection for the subordination of the animal, themselves viewing the life free of human greed to be inherently more virtuous (D.L. 6.2.22). For further discussion of the Cynic doctrine, and its relationship to Lucian's own works, see the Introductory chapter. See also J. Romm, "Dog-Heads and Noble Savages: Cynicism before the Cynics?" in *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and its Legacy* edited by R. Bracht Branham and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 121–35.

successful hybrid, once again, the corrupted hybrid is shown to be of little worth, and an embarrassment to the true philosophy.

### *Imitators of Human Speech*

In consideration of Lucian's *Gallus*, which includes as one of its primary interlocutors a talking rooster, it is also useful to outline the presence of talking *birds* in the philosophical and literary texts of antiquity. The choice by Lucian to include a talking bird, as will be illuminated, is far from being unprecedented, however the means by which he engages with his predecessors deserves consideration. While Lucian's speaking rooster has the power of speech on account of being the reincarnated form of Pythagoras, Lucian attributes speech to the rooster beyond a mere imitative capacity, reflecting upon the relationship between speech and intellect.

Stoics were thus among the main opponents of animal reason and consequently of animal speech. However it is curious that the philosophical school gives some concession to birds, as Chrysippus is credited by Varro as likening the speech of birds to the speech of human children. "Ravens, crows, and boys making their first attempts to speak" do not truly speak (*loqui*), but merely quasi-speak (*ut loqui*) and thus are not talking (*non loquuntur*) (Varro, *de Lingua Latina* 6.56).<sup>281</sup> Similarly, Aristotle considers birds to be distinct from other non-human animals in terms of their capacity for speech. Following his discussion of the physical requirements for eloquent speech, Aristotle states that "birds can utter a voice (φωνήν) and those which have a broad tongue can articulate (διάλεκτος) best, so too those that have a thin fine tongue." (*H.A.* 4.9.536a.20) However both Chrysippus and Aristotle agree that the speech of birds is not true human language; as Fögen observes, the parrot, despite having a tongue like a man "is grouped together with those animals that have a talent for imitation, the so-called *mimetika*"<sup>282</sup> (*H.A.* 8.12.597b). Birds' capacity for speech, therefore, is either no more than child-like chatter devoid of meaning, or mere imitation of human language, yet they are nevertheless considered somewhat distinct from other non-human animals.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> T. Fögen, 'Animal Communication', 221.

<sup>282</sup> T. Fögen, 'Animal Communication', 220.

<sup>283</sup> The human perception that birds are perhaps more like humans than other non-human animals is not restricted to ancient thought. Lingis aligns birds and humans by their physical stature, both being

In the literary sphere, birds appear as imitators of the human tongue in Aristophanes' *Birds*, wherein the primary characters intend to meet with Tereus in his form as the hoopoe, who, despite his avian form, can speak with a human voice (Ar. *Av.* 92ff.).<sup>284</sup> Additionally, Tereus also claims to have taught the other birds language (φωνήν), making them no longer like barbarians. (Ar. *Av.* 200) Mahoney, who discusses the prevalence of language throughout the comedy, notes the birds' linguistic characterisation. Significantly, when Peisthetairos convinces the birds to a course of action, he uses avian language<sup>285</sup> consisting of vocabulary related to wings and flying, which is not unlike the bird characters' imitative use of Greek language. Birds imitating human speech are also evidenced in 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD Latin poetry, largely in relation to parrots. Ovid's *Amores* contains a eulogy to Corinna's parrot, which is portrayed within the opening lines as *imitatrix* (Ov. *Am.* 2.6.1) Her parrot, Ovid states, is characterised as cleverly manipulating its voice, being a lover of speaking, and excelling all other birds in speaking (Ov. *Am.* 2.6.2). This prominence of the parrot's mimicry is likewise found in Ovid's literary successor Statius,<sup>286</sup> wherein the dead bird is characterised as one who imitated cleverly the speech of humans. (Stat. 1.4.2; *humanae sollers imitator...linguae*) The notion of birds being able to imitate human speech is also a common trope in later texts; Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* tells of a young man who taught birds to speak like humans (*VA.* 6.36), Porphyry highlights human understanding of bird-speech as evidence of their *logos* (Porph. *Abst.* 3.3), Aelian notes that the jay in particular is especially proficient at imitating the human voice (*Ael.* NA. 4.19), and the parrot, according to Apuleius, imitates human speech with such precision that if one were to hear it, it would be considered human (Apul. *Fl.* 12).

It is evident, therefore, that the speaking bird is common throughout the Graeco-Roman world, and the overview above is by no means comprehensive. Each of these

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bipeds, yet also emphasises the “feats of intelligence and ingenuity performed by birds” as “of all the mammals, only humans are capable of anything remotely like them.” Drawing from modern sources, Lingis considers the similarity between birds and humans on the basis of their perception of space and self-awareness, and importantly, scientific inquiry's wariness of deeming birds as intelligent in an attempt to steer away from anthropomorphising beasts. (A. Lingis, 'Understanding Avian Intelligence' in L. Simmon and P. Armstrong (Leiden: Brill, 2007) Leiden, 43-56, esp. 43, 45, 50.)

<sup>284</sup> Many of the bird-characters in the play largely speak Greek on account of narrative necessity. (B. Pütz, 'Good to Laugh With' in *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life* edited by G. L. Campbell, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) 64.)

<sup>285</sup> A. Mahoney, 'Key Terms in "Birds"', *The Classical World* 100:3 (2007): 274.

<sup>286</sup> Dietrich observes that it is this characterisation of the parrot as an imitator by Statius is a deliberate allusion to Ovid's *Amores*, who himself is recollecting Catullus' dead sparrow poem. (3) (J.S. Dietrich, 'Dead Parrots Society' *American Journal of Philology* 123:1 (2002): 100).

authors, including Lucian, is undoubtedly using the speaking bird in the context of their own literary agenda. As will be explored, Lucian's choice to reincarnate Pythagoras in the form of a speaking, articulate rooster similarly reflects his particular purposes in this dialogue. What is distinctly different in Lucian, however, is the portrayal of the speaking rooster as not imitating human language, but being able to speak it fluently and eloquently.

### **The Philosophical Animal**

As evidenced above, speaking birds are largely attested in ancient literary sources as having an imitative capacity, and are not attributed with their own rational means to articulate speech. In Lucian's *Gallus*, however, the bird is portrayed as not only having the capacity to speak human language, but this speech is not characterised as mere mimicry. The recently reincarnated Pythagoras acts as a *plausible* medium through which Lucian may portray his speaking bird, although it would not be *unreasonable* for an ordinary bird to speak with a human voice.

*Gallus* is centred around a philosophical inquiry into the nature of wealth and relative happiness in life.<sup>287</sup> The cobbler Micyllus wakes from a dream wherein he is shown an alternate lifestyle free of poverty, yet his blissful slumber is interrupted by the “piercing, full throated crow” (γεγωνός ἀναβοήσας Luc. *Gall.* 1.5) of the rooster. It is in this initial introduction that Lucian makes it clear that the crow of the rooster is distinct from the usual sound of birds. γεγωνός largely refers to the volume of sound that is produced, however it may also indicate how articulate the given sound is. Following Micyllus' lament, however, the rooster replies, speaking Greek. The rooster explains that he is merely doing his job; the primary characterisation of the rooster is, of course, as a bird which crows in the morning. (Pliny. 10.24)<sup>288</sup> Nevertheless, he states that if Micyllus would prefer, he will be “much more mute than a fish”. (Luc. *Gall.* 1. 23-24 πολὺ ἀφωρότερος ...τῶν ἰχθύων) The rooster may choose to be silent, or to speak, which grants the bird conscious control over language. In the context of the Greek other, Heath notes control of one's speech is crucial to understanding and

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<sup>287</sup> See too, T. Hawkins, 'Eloquent Alogia,' 10, for discussion of Lucian's *Gallus* dialogue in relation to animal speech.

<sup>288</sup> D. Thompson, 'Glossary of Greek Birds' 38.



utilising humanity.<sup>289</sup> Spartan society, he argues, emphasises silence in comparison to Athenian loquaciousness, and the key to ensuring that the *humanity* of the Spartans remains intact rests upon their active restraint over speech, and not that their silence is enforced.<sup>290</sup> From this basis, the rooster of *Gallus* is able to both speak and to maintain control over speech, imbuing the bird with one of the core features of humanity.

Unsurprisingly, Micyllus expresses wonder at the rooster's capacity for human speech. There is no suggestion that the rooster merely imitates human speech, only that the bird does indeed speak as a human, as indicated by Micyllus' explicit description of his speech being delivered "humanly" (ἄνθρωπίνως). Micyllus' astonished reaction to the speaking bird is met with the rooster's disdain. Micyllus is characterised by the rooster as ἀπαίδευτος (uneducated) for not possessing knowledge of talking animals in the Greek past, thus already expressing the ignorance of his human interlocutor. Additionally, the rooster states that given the proximity in which the rooster lives to men, it would be easy for the bird "to learn the human language" (*Gall.* 2.25-26 ἐκμαθήσεσθαι τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φωνήν). The rooster does not require instruction to learn human speech, but learns merely from exposure, and it would not be *unreasonable* for the rooster to pick up the odd phrase.

However despite going to such lengths to justify the rooster's capacity for speech, it is revealed to the audience that the rooster is endowed with speech on account of being the reincarnated Pythagoras. The rooster is able to speak (εἰπεῖν) with a common language (ὁμοφωνίας *Luc. Gall.* 4.13; 3.27-8) as he has the mind of a human: a far more plausible explanation for the uneducated cobbler. Thus the Lucianic rooster is explicitly characterised as having both the mind and voice of humans, but is merely lacking a human body. Consequently, if it looks like a rooster and walks like a rooster, it could in fact be a philosopher.

### *Pythagoras as Rooster*

The rooster's capacity for speech, therefore, is primarily as a result of its Pythagorean and importantly human soul, however the rooster's intrinsic qualities are nevertheless shown to enhance the plausibility of the bird's loquacious nature. Yet despite having

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<sup>289</sup> J. Heath, *The Talking Greeks: Speech, Animals and the other in Homer, Aeschylus and Plato*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 32.

<sup>290</sup> J. Heath, *The Talking Greeks*, 183-4.

the mind and voice of the human philosopher Pythagoras, the rooster no longer identifies as human. Pythagoras' identification as first and foremost a rooster raises a number of questions about the dialogue itself, and its presentation of philosophical discourse. Since alektruo-Pythagoras considers himself to be more alektruo than Pythagoras, the audience is arguably exposed more to a speaking animal than a reincarnated philosopher.<sup>291</sup>

Having established that Micyllus' interlocutor is in fact Pythagoras, Micyllus is faced with a dilemma. He questions alektruo-Pythagoras' non-compliance with Pythagorean principles, stating that either the figure is in fact not the reincarnated Pythagoras, or that he has been exposed more to a speaking animal than a reincarnated philosopher, as he no longer identifies as human. Yet alektruo-Pythagoras has not committed any punishable act. The adoption of bean eating is justified on account of his form as a rooster. Pythagoras asserts that he *used* to be a philosopher (ἐφιλοσόφουν), but now that he is in the form of a rooster, he lives in the manner of birds, and thus the consumption of beans is no longer forbidden (*Gall.* 5.3-5).<sup>292</sup> If Pythagoras' form determines the validity of his actions, then as a rooster, new laws apply.<sup>293</sup>

It should briefly be noted that Micyllus also identifies alektruo-Pythagoras' loquaciousness as in defiance of Pythagorean philosophy. Pythagoras, according to Micyllus, "recommended silence for five whole years", and since he is presently "noisy and loud voiced" he surely cannot be Pythagoras himself. This contrast of silence and speaking, contained not only in a dialogue but in a dialogue concerned with unconventional speech, encourages reflection upon Micyllus' criticism. Alektruo-Pythagoras does not provide a justification to this supposed violation of Pythagorean

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<sup>291</sup> This insistence by alektruo-Pythagoras on being viewed by his interlocutor as a rooster suggests in some ways that the chosen 'title' reflects the individual's chosen 'way of life'. In embracing aspects of the Cynic doctrine, namely the dismissal of wealth (*Gall.* 15), it is also possible to view Pythagoras as not only converting to his rooster life, but also the Cynic lifestyle.

<sup>292</sup> The comparative gravity of these two actions, as Harmon has determined, finds its origins in a Pythagorean fragment that likens the eating of beans to eating the heads of your parents. (*Gall.* 4.31, n.2; H. Diels and W. Kranz. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker Volume One*, (Dublin and Zürich: Weidmann, 1952) 96-105).

<sup>293</sup> It is useful to consider this contrast of human laws and animal laws in the context of Aristophanes' *Clouds*. Drawing to the conclusion of the play, the rooster is characterised by its inclination to 'defend' itself, or use force against its father. The characterisation acts as a justification for the actions of Pheidippides in the comedy, for since such an action is common to all animals, it is not unjust for him to treat his own father, Strepsiades, in such a way (Arist. *Nu.* 1420ff.). While the *Clouds* is focussed more upon questioning the Socratic ideals, it is on account of Pheidippides' time in the Thinkery that he is able to profess such an argument. Pythagoras has also encountered a transformation which affects his ideals. The most forbidden action, as bad as doing harm to one's own parents, is of no consequence, as he is now exempt from the Pythagorean ruling principles – perhaps even to the extent that he has adopted the Cynic lifestyle instead.

philosophy, as it was during his life as Pythagoras, that he was silent. Additionally, as Pythagorean silence was largely intended as an exercise in self-control,<sup>294</sup> alektruo-Pythagoras' assertion that he would be mute if Micyllus preferred rather emphasises his capacity for such. Thus, alektruo-Pythagoras' form again determines his actions, and arguably, in the context of anthropocentric philosophical discourse, sets up the notion of contest through Micyllus' questioning.

Pythagoras' connection to his rooster form is also emphasised towards the end of the dialogue. Micyllus does not consistently refer to alektruo-Pythagoras as one or the other, but instead switches between his mode of address indiscriminately, until such time as he explicitly asks Pythagoras "what he likes best to be called" (*Gall.* 20.18). Pythagoras' response confirms his self-identification as a rooster, as he states: "You had better called me what you now see me to be, a rooster" (*Gall.* 20.22-23). Pythagoras' preference to be called 'ἄλεκτρον' encourages a reflection upon perceiving the mind of the non-human animal; the rooster, he states, is a bird that already seems to be of little value (*Gall.* 20. 25) and he does not wish to deprive it of its capacity to embody many souls, these being the rooster's previous incarnations. For all intents and purposes, alektruo-Pythagoras considers himself to be a rooster, despite retaining the memory of his previous existences.

### *Philosophical truth?*

It is alektruo-Pythagoras' previous lives that is the focus of the remaining narrative. Despite identifying as the rooster at this present time, alektruo-Pythagoras nevertheless retains memory of his previous incarnations. It is worth digressing briefly to examine these various existences, given alektruo-Pythagoras' identification as all of these forms in the physical body of one.

Prior to his incarnations as both Pythagoras and a rooster, his soul was first embodied in the form of Apollo.<sup>295</sup> While his story is apparently both forbidden for him

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<sup>294</sup> See Iamblichus, *Vita Pyth.* XVII.

<sup>295</sup> The rooster as an oracular bird is not a common association among ancient literary sources, and thus the association of the prophetic Apollo with the rooster is likely part of the joke. While Lucian's own *de Dea Syria* speaks of a sacred rooster utilised during a particular festival, it is not chosen for any talents in divination. Pliny makes mention of certain breeds of roosters that give "the most favourable omens" (*tripudia solistima*) by means of eating grain, and states that their crows foretell victories or

to tell and would be too long, (*Gall.* 16) the indirect association of the rooster with Apollo is nevertheless a crucial detail of the text. As Marcovich notes, the inclusion of the soul's previous incarnation as Apollo provides a reasoning behind Lucian's choice to figure the soul of Pythagoras in the form of a rooster.<sup>296</sup> By utilising already established notions of the three figures being associated in one way or another, not only do the memories of Pythagoras remain embodied in the rooster, but also the memories of Apollo. The rooster, usually a lowly animal, becomes heightened to both a god and esteemed philosopher.

Having originated in Apollo, the soul of alektruo-Pythagoras entered the body of Euphorbus, the Trojan hero, who was killed by Menelaus.<sup>297</sup> (*Gall.* 16) Following this incarnation, he transmigrated into the form of Pythagoras (*Gall.* 18), and then the courtesan of Miletus, Aspasia (*Gall.* 19). Afterwards, he was the Cynic Crates, and then lists his many and varied forms: a king, a poor man, a satrap, a horse, a jackdaw and a frog. It is only recently that he has become a rooster, and it is only recently that he has been able to do anything more than crow (*Gall.* 14). Lucian's specific choice of a rooster as the speaking, reincarnated form of Pythagoras is curious in the context of his previous souls. Through the dialogue's presentation of the rooster's past lives, the audience is presented with an immortal, humbled and educated soul with which Micyllus may speak with.

It is now necessary to consider the philosophical implications of presenting an animal, albeit in reincarnated form, as a figure who may educate and enlighten a human interlocutor in the essence of a Cynic doctrine. Having lived through many forms,

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losses (Pliny 2.24.49). Cicero, in his *de Divinatione* however, denies the rooster's capacity for such portents, given the evidently arbitrary nature of the bird's crows (Cicero, *Div.* 2.26). The rooster, therefore, could hardly be considered a traditionally oracular bird.

<sup>296</sup> As Marcovich has explored, Lucian's choice to portray the Pythagorean soul in the form of a rooster goes beyond being a continuation of the Cynic trope of having an animal as protagonist. He asserts that such a choice aims to emphasise the threefold link between the rooster, the philosopher and the divinity Apollo and their shared oracular capacities. Marcovich states that the prophetic rooster is indicated in two passages of *Gallus* following his assertion of an Apollonian soul. Here, alektruo-Pythagoras reveals his knowledge of Micyllus' past and future forms (M. Marcovich, 'Pythagoras as Cock' *The American Journal of Philology* 97:4 (1976): 331-335; *Gall.* 16.10; 19.20); Micyllus was once an Indian ant, and he will undoubtedly at one point be in the form of a woman. This reference to Indian ants and a transitioning into a woman can be viewed in the context of Herodotus respectively, with the 'ant's so called desire for gold (Hdt. 3.102) reflecting upon Plato's failure to control emotions in his Timaeus (Pl. *Tim.* 41e3-42d2).

<sup>297</sup> For a discussion of Pythagoras' reincarnation as Euphorbus, see M. Hendry, 'Pythagoras' Previous Parents: Why Euphorbos?', *Mnemosyne*, vol. 48.2 (1995): 210-211.

alektruo-Pythagoras may express first hand to the wealth-hungry Micyllus that it is in fact a more pleasant life in poverty. It is shown to Micyllus that those whom he envies live in fear of their wealth being taken from them, and despite their wealth are ill-fated (κακοδαίμων). In times of war, the poor may flee easily while the rich are burdened with responsibilities and possessions (*Gall.* 21); wealth and power, as alektruo-Pythagoras has learned first-hand, is filled with “many vexations and torments” (*Gall.* 24) while the poor man does not fear his wealth being stolen (*Gall.* 22).

The sentiment that poverty is far more desirable than wealth is of course not innovative in Lucian’s dialogue. Most famously, Xenophon’s *Symposium* outlines such an idea through the characters of Charmides and Antisthenes, through their respective pride in poverty and wealth. The Cynic Antisthenes reveals that he takes pride in wealth of the *soul* through an attitude of *sufficiency* of wealth. Greed and excess are the characteristics that define bad wealth, as a desire for more than is sufficient results in an absence of virtue (Xen. *Symp.* 4.34-44). Conversely, Charmides’ assertion that poverty is more worthy of pride rests upon the same concerns addressed by alektruo-Pythagoras in the *Gallus* dialogue. Poverty, states Charmides, is free from the fears and doubt that come with wealth, and it is only through his new-found life in poverty that he has achieved a virtuous existence (4. 29-33). If Xenophon’s *Symposium* may be viewed as a marker of “literary symposium tradition” not unlike Plato’s,<sup>298</sup> the repetition of such a philosophical point in Lucian’s text deserves further analysis. His engagement with the sympotic ideal of Plato’s symposium through the dismissal of wealth clearly offers a reflection upon contemporary philosophy, in a not dissimilar way to that shown in Lucian’s own *Symposium* dialogue. Once again, Lucian presents the disconnect of contemporary philosophy and acquisition of wisdom through a comparison between a hybrid animal and a human character. The dialogue imagines an animal hybrid who is superior in wisdom to the human interlocutor, suggesting the low point to which humanity has sunk and the possibility that a non-human animal, albeit a special one, could perhaps do better.

To return then, to the era of the Golden Age and the Aesopic fable. The rooster appears frequently in the fable, however it is one fable in particular that is the focus for the following discussion due to its emphasis upon contest. Fable 5 of Babrius (Perry 281)

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<sup>298</sup> J. König, *Saints and Symposiasts*, 11.

relates the story of two fighting roosters of Tanagra. When one was defeated, it hid, while the other flapped and crowed victoriously, alerting the attention of a passing eagle that swooped it. Here, the rooster's crow is associated with victory, however it is the rooster's excessive pride that brings its downfall. It is interesting that the roosters of Tanagra were known *specifically* for their skills in fighting, as Pausanias outlines in his description of the region (9.22.4), and that it is *specifically* Tanagran roosters that are indicated in Lucian's *Gallus*. Micyllus asks of alektruo-Pythagoras the means by which he became a rooster instead of a man, specifically defining him as a Tanagriote, from which it is not unreasonable to assert that Lucian is evoking the fighting qualities of the rooster in the context of dialogue. Such an interpretation is solidified through the broader message of the Lucianic dialogue, as the contest between the openly victorious rooster and the defeated rooster may be compared to the contest between the rich and the poor.

If it is possible to view the *Gallus* dialogue as alluding to the Aesopic Golden age in terms of animal speech and characteristics, it is worthwhile to turn again to Plato's Golden age, and the immaterial wealth that is to be gained by having the capacity to speak with animals. Once Micyllus has seen the way in which the rich live, he no longer considers wealth to be desirable. Rather, two obols are a fortune to him, and it can be concluded that he now believes alektruo-Pythagoras' assertion that he should consider his lot to be "immeasurably happier" (εὐδαιμονέστερον) than that of those with wealth. Micyllus' now enlightened disposition has come as a result of philosophical conversation with the non-human animal, and thus the *Gallus* dialogue proves that indeed, humans may be immeasurably happier by being able to speak with animals. The hybrid alektruo-Pythagoras, rather than representing corruption between two forms, offers an arguably natural perspective upon human existence. While on the surface Micyllus speaks with the reincarnated Pythagoras, alektruo-Pythagoras nevertheless embodies a hybrid of forms, and himself identifies as a rooster.

This notion of contest thus becomes one of the core features of the dialogue. Dierauer does note that this expression of preference over the less appealing lifestyle acts as something of a trope among Cynic authors, with specific reference to Plutarch's *Gryllus* dialogue.<sup>299</sup> The character of Gryllus, a man turned pig, undoubtedly prefers the life of

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<sup>299</sup> U. Dierauer, *Tier und Mensch im Denken der Antike* (Amsterdam: Verlag B.R. Grüner, 1977) 191.

an animal to the life of man, at one point expressing that he no longer has any care for gold or wealth (Plut. *Gryll.* 989D).<sup>300</sup> While Lucian's *Gallus* does not express any notion of considering the life of the animal to be superior to the life of man, the emphasis is nevertheless upon a simple, Cynic disposition. This emphasis upon the simple life over the extravagant has further implications through alektruo-Pythagoras' mythological parallel, representing the turning point in Micyllus' education. "Some of them [humans]" alektruo-Pythagoras says, are like Icarus, in that they have let their "ambitions soar high in the air" and will fall downwards into the sea, while others are more like Daedalus, who keep their ambitions close to the earth (*Gall.* 23). It is hardly a stretch to see the way in which this notion of ambition becomes a direct parallel to the hybridity of the philosopher-sophists, the wealth driven, hybrid Icarus being shown to have no true regard to the attainment of wisdom. In direct contrast, the hybrid figure of Daedalus represents self-control and temperance. By employing the form of the rooster as the hybrid speaking animal, or the Daedalus in this context, the perception of intellect becomes a core consideration for the dialogue. A rooster, albeit one that speaks as the reincarnated Pythagoras becomes a true source of wisdom, while the seemingly capable human, merely wishes to appear of worth, and is in fact, ignorant in his speech and actions.

In conclusion, it is useful to return to Porphyry. Animals are said to speak a peculiar language, and human incomprehension of their speech is not a result of animals lacking language. Micyllus, in Lucian's *Gallus*, despite his initial surprise, comes to acknowledge the multi-faceted nature of his loquacious rooster. Given that it is also noted that alektruo-Pythagoras could not always speak to Micyllus, the audience is arguably faced with a philosophical problem, one that mirrors the Porphyrian assertions. Although the animal may not speak, it is an insufficient basis from which to draw conclusions about its intellectual capacity. While Lucian's take on the philosophical talking animal is, at its heart, a satirical text, it should not be ignored that the primary object of this satire is the anthropocentric actions of mankind, and a perspective that ignores the position of humans as one type of animal among others. In the Golden Age, speech was universal, yet the arrogance of the beasts robbed them of

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<sup>300</sup> Plutarch's dialogue provides reason to animals, expressly rejecting human superiority, and Odysseus' ability to converse with the transformed pig is also given a 'rational' reason: Circe's magic. (985Bff.)

their speech. Human arrogance too, threatens to rob them; the wealthy characters of Lucian's *Gallus* live in constant fear of having their riches stolen. The human preoccupation with wealth precisely reflects the actions of the contemporary philosopher-sophists. Rather than embracing a simpler life as a means to gain virtue and wisdom, they are shown to be unable to detach themselves from human concerns. However Lucian's *Gallus* offers a comparative perspective upon such an existence, showing that through an interaction with the race of animals, in this case a hybrid rooster and Pythagoras, it is indeed possible to embrace a more natural and uncorrupted existence. The dialogue reflects upon the ideals and possibilities of the Golden Age, directly dismissing the contemporary philosophers as having any capacity to reach the heights of virtue that was once afforded philosophical inquiry. As with the Aesopic fable, the figure of uncontrolled speech (or crowing, in this case) in victory does not emerge victorious. The true victor recognises the importance of self-control and the dangers of flying too close to the sun as a corrupted hybrid. The true, successful hybrid, as will be shown in the following chapter, is once again achievable through a dismissal or rejection of human arrogance. Rather than flying too close to the sun, and getting burned, the character of Icaromenippus presents a successful hybrid that displaces the false knowledge of the corrupted philosopher-sophists.



## Chapter Four

### Viewing from Above with Icaromenippus and Charon

*I'm tired of this Earth, these people. I'm tired of being caught in the tangle of their lives.*

*We gaze continually at the world and it grows dull in our perceptions. Yet seen from another's vantage point, as if new, it may still take the breath away.*

Dr. Manhattan, Alan Moore's *Watchmen*

Hadot, in his essay entitled 'The View From Above', contemplates the philosophical and literary trope of positioning a character from a higher vantage point. Crucially, he observes that in addition to showing us a vision of the world as harmonious, "the view from above can also be directed pitilessly upon mankind's weaknesses and shortcomings."<sup>301</sup> This characteristic of viewing from above is the focus of the following discussion, as it is argued that Lucian utilises the trope as literary tool to underpin both the weaknesses of mankind, and of the philosopher-sophists. In his essay, Hadot includes two Lucianic dialogues, these being *Icaromenippus* and *Charon*. Both of these, he argues, epitomise the relationship that viewing from above has with the Cynic doctrine, due to the focus upon humanity's "earthly existence."<sup>302</sup> These two, along with Lucian's *True Histories*, position the primary narrator high above the human sphere, allowing the narrator (and the audience) to look down upon the entirety of humanity. In Lucian's two dialogues, his characters reach a vantage point through what may be termed 'non-philosophical methods,' presenting them as literally moving upwards rather than a simple philosophical ascent. Consequently, it becomes clear that the philosopher-sophists have quite literally blinded both themselves and humanity through their false professions of wisdom, as their philosophical methods are no longer effective, nor are they needed. The view from above reveals a new perspective on the hybridity of sophists. By positioning his characters upon an elevated point, Lucian's commentary upon sophistic untruths is projected on a more expansive scale, allowing his characters to see with complete clarity the false professions of wisdom that the philosopher-sophists espouse. Moreover, the characters who view the world from above take on the characteristics of creatures who more normally inhabit the higher regions, becoming in this regard hybrids themselves. Once again, Lucian uses the theme

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<sup>301</sup> P. Hadot and M. Chase (tr.), *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995) 245.

<sup>302</sup> P. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 246.

of the hybrid in varying ways so as to formulate and construct his critique. In *Icaromenippus*, the figure of Menippus ascends to the heavens, and Charon journeys to the human sphere from the underworld. In travelling to these places, the characters in question are shown to modify themselves or to enlist the aid of external forces, becoming a mixture of human, animal and god through the acquisition of divine or bestial abilities. Through such a vantage point, the day-to-day existence of humanity and their widespread concern with reputation may be viewed with clarity, and once again we return to the theme of greed, wealth and the corrupting forces of the philosopher-sophists (*Icar.* 21). In the following chapter, it is shown how Lucian utilises hybridity and its many functions to further his critique of the philosopher-sophists, although this time by literally looking down upon them.<sup>303</sup>

In what follows, Lucian's use of Platonic allusion in these two dialogues will also be discussed, as it aids in identifying his inclusion of animals in these texts as a means of commenting on the corrupted nature of the philosopher-sophists. Notions of the ascent of the soul are found throughout the Platonic corpus, especially in the *Phaedrus* and *Republic*. The notion of the soul's ascent is not limited to Platonic thought,<sup>304</sup> though due to the prevalence of Platonic modes of thought during Lucian's time it is useful to consider this trope of ascent in such a context. With such an approach in mind, it is possible to view Lucian's use of Platonic modes of thought being reflected here. As has been shown in Chapter Two the Platonic model of distinguishing between the philosopher and the sophist serves well to highlight the notions of corruption that Lucian presents in his dialogues. It is thus argued that a similar model is utilised through the act of positioning his characters as ascending to the skies, wholly with the intent to highlight the failings of these false philosophers. With this in mind, it will be useful to re-consider notions of reincarnation and the passage of the soul that were discussed in the previous chapter. The ascent of the soul, in the Platonic doctrine, is not dissimilar to the conception of the soul as travelling through various reincarnations, aligning somewhat the Platonic ascent with Stoic and Epicurean philosophical principles.

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<sup>303</sup> Due to space constraints, a discussion of the two companion dialogues, *The Downward Journey* and *Nekyomanteia* are not considered here. In these dialogues, Lucian position his characters *below* the earth, however the effect is not dissimilar. Here, as in *Dialogues of the Dead*, the sheer futility of humanity's concern for wealth is once again discussed, and particularly in the context of the *Nekyomanteia* this comes as a result of philosophical corruption.

<sup>304</sup> P. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 242.

Lucian's dialogues utilise the traditional tenets of various philosophical schools through the theme of ascent, directing his criticism towards the contemporary philosophers. By being able to view the truths of humanity from above, he questions how it is that these sophists, with their false proclamations of knowledge, are able to ascend, if they have not yet learned to fly.

### **Ascent as a Literary Trope**

The charioteer myth in Plato's *Phaedrus* describes the nature of the soul, and its journey towards ascent. When the soul is "perfect and fully winged," states Socrates, "the soul mounts upwards and governs the whole world" (Pl. *Phdr.* 246B.7-C.1-2). In order to ascend, the wings of the soul must be nurtured by becoming fine, wise and good (246B.1-2), and must reach the peak of embodied existence by becoming a philosopher. The soul, in *Phaedrus*, is comprised of a charioteer and two horses, and while the souls of the gods are led by two good horses, the souls of both *daimones* and humans have both a 'good' and a 'bad' horse, the bad having the capacity to bring the soul down from the heavens<sup>305</sup> (247C ff.). While composed with a slightly different philosophical agenda, themes of ascent can also be found in *The Republic*, wherein the dialogue discussing the Cave analogy explores the necessity for ascent and descent to produce an adequate governing ruler. (Pl. *R.* 514ff.) In a similar manner to the *Phaedrus*, the philosopher-ruler must ascend to gain the truth, only to imprison the enlightened soul in the human world again for the greater benefit of the citizens. Plato's suggestion that truth and wisdom exist above the human (or present) sphere pervades well into the philosophical discourse of the Roman Empire; Socrates, states Cicero in his *Tusculan Disputations*, "was the first to call philosophy down from the heavens and set her in the cities of men" (Cic. *Tusc.* 4.12ff.), largely aligning with the procedure prescribed to rulers in accordance with the Platonic ideal.

Ascent to the heavens as a means to gain wisdom, or as result of the highest attainment of virtue and wisdom,<sup>306</sup> was clearly a pervasive and common trope for the Platonic doctrine and its adherents. In the context of Platonic dialogues, there is little doubt

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<sup>305</sup> D.D. McGibbon, 'The Fall of the Soul in Plato's *Phaedrus*', *Classical Quarterly* 14:1 (1964): 56.

<sup>306</sup> J. M. Armstrong, 'After the Ascent: Plato on Becoming Like God,' *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 26 (2004): 171-183.

among scholars that Lucian was inspired by both the style and subject matter of the Platonic dialogues in his construction of his satirical works.<sup>307</sup> At the forefront of many of these discussions are Lucian's *Symposium, or the Lapiths*, which has been extensively discussed in Chapter Two. However the Platonic influence has been shown to present itself in a number<sup>308</sup> of other Lucianic dialogues, namely *Philopseudes* and the *Verae Historiae*. Given the prevalence of Platonic allusions in Lucian's works, it is not unreasonable to consider that the notion of ascent to the heavens found in Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Republic* is employed by Lucian in his two satirical dialogues *Icaromenippus* and *Charon*. With the Platonic model in mind, it is thus possible to engage with the philosophical contest that Lucian obliquely presents in the two dialogues. Philosophers and their opposing doctrines are criticised throughout the Lucianic corpus, including *Icaromenippus* and *Charon*. Menippus and Charon respectively are portrayed as characters who ascend beyond their traditional realm so as to gain a greater knowledge of truth. However in contrast to the Platonic model, their ascent is carried out not by the enlightened soul, but in a physical body, implicitly questioning the Platonic belief of ascent being restricted to the souls of philosophers. Lucian revises the Platonic grading of souls, proposing that philosophers are not the pinnacle of knowledge and enlightenment. The elitism and superiority of the philosopher-sophists is shown to be entirely unfounded, and the corruption that permeates the hybrid philosopher is revealed to have similarly corrupted non-elites alike.

### ***Icaromenippus and Charon***

Lucian's two dialogues, *Icaromenippus* and *Charon*, transport their primary characters from the human world and the Underworld respectively, and offer a perspective upon

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<sup>307</sup> R.B. Branham, *Unruly Eloquence: Lucian and the Comedy of Traditions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); A. Laird, 'Fiction as a Discourse of Philosophy in Lucian's *Verae Historiae*' in *The Ancient Novel and Beyond*, edited by S. Panayotakis, M. Zimmerman, W. Keulen (Leiden: Brill, 2003) Leiden, 115-128; K. ní Mheallaigh 'Plato was not alone there...: Platonic presences in Lucian' *Hermathena* 179 (2005): 89-103.

<sup>308</sup> For further discussion on the Platonic allusions in Lucian, and the broader consideration of Lucian's use of the Platonic/Menippean genres, see K. ní Mheallaigh, 'Lucien et l'astropoétique: le voyage à travers les genres' (tr. A. Billault), in E. Marquis and A. Billault (eds.) *Mixis: le mélange des genres chez Lucien de Samosate* (Paris: Demopolis, 2018) 49-69 and W.H. Tackaberry, 'Lucian's Relation to Plato and the Post-Aristotelian Philosophers', *University of Toronto Studies, Philological Series* 9 (1930).

the world from above. In the following section, it will be argued that the means and motivations of their ascent are crucial features of these satirical dialogues. Dissatisfaction with the current state of philosophy encourages the two primary characters in each text to seek out wisdom without the aid of the so-called philosophers, and to instead utilise elements of the natural world in order to see the world clearly, in this case, from above. This interaction with nature, as will be shown, is constructed in direct opposition to the wholly *unnatural* desires of the human race, which are attributed to the corrupting force of contemporary philosophy. Once again, Lucian interacts with the Aesopic tradition and the implications of such a tradition upon perceptions on elite and non-elite culture, positioning his characters in the midst of this literary and social divide. Lucian addresses this divide and creates characters who are positioned in a hybrid space. The Lucianic hybrids, quite literally occupying the interspace between the high and the low, are shown to be wiser than the philosopher-sophists, and despite traversing beyond their proper boundaries, are portrayed as neither corrupt, nor representative of claims to false wisdom.

Lucian's *Icaromenippus* features the Cynic Menippus, who “found that all human things were amusing, weak and fickle” and sought out the philosophers so as to understand the meaning of the universe (*Icar.* 4ff.). However Menippus discovers that the philosophers, despite their professions of wisdom, were no less ignorant than himself and what's more, their “statements were contradictory and inconsistent” (*Icar.* 5).<sup>309</sup> Menippus thus resolves to fly to the Heavens himself, as the human sphere has failed to provide him with any truth (*Icar.* 10). Menippus, over the course of his journey is able to see the life of humanity in full detail from above, and comes to understand the extent of human greed and their concern with reputation. Similarly, *Charon* opens with the Ferryman of the Underworld himself who, travels to the human world to “see what it is like in life” in order to understand why it is that they grieve upon joining him in the underworld (*Char.* 1). Charon wishes to be shown all of that which resides above Hades, and implores Hermes to act as his guide to the human world. Hermes suggests that they find a high vantage point from which to view the world below. The dialogue

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<sup>309</sup> The notion that ‘those with a reputation for wisdom’, (τινα τῶν δοκούτων σοφῶν εἶναι, Pl. *Ap.* 21.B11) in all their professions of wisdom, are in fact not wise on the basis that they falsely think themselves to have knowledge is a core theme of Plato's *Apology*. As has been shown in previous chapters, this concern with distinguishing between those with a reputation for philosophy, and those who should be considered a ‘proper’ philosopher was not an uncommon trope for authors of the Second Sophistic.

acts as a commentary upon the nature of human existence, and the way in which, when viewed from above, the actions and beliefs of men are entirely foolish, given that one's wealth and status while living do not have any influence in death.

The two texts therefore are undoubtedly concerned with presenting an external view of humanity and human desires. Moreover, close analysis of the two texts suggests that the link between them goes beyond their similar overarching theme. The two characters both recognise that knowledge and wisdom are reliant upon a form of ascent, and the need to ascend above their realm implies the absence of wisdom in the mortal realm. The two primary characters do not achieve their enlightenment through what may be considered 'traditional' means – by engaging with philosophers. The use of animals and the natural world in the texts brings into question the role of Lucian's contemporary philosophers, and enhances their inherent ineffectiveness. Once again, this interaction with the natural world evokes the era of Aesop and the Golden Age, allowing for Lucian to reflect upon the starkly dissimilar capacity for knowledge that is offered during his time. The perceived superiority of human knowledge<sup>310</sup> does not reflect reality, but rather serves to highlight the inferiority of the contemporary philosopher-sophists.

### *Means of Ascent and Sharp-Sight*

In the two dialogues discussed, it is important to consider the means by which the respective characters are able to ascend. Given the dismissal of the philosopher-sophists as a source of wisdom, it is pivotal that the protagonists of these dialogues instead choose to interact with the natural world and literary precedent in order to ascend to inhuman heights, engaging with Golden Age idealism in favour of contemporary reality. In the context of *Icaromenippus*, Menippus is inspired by the works of Aesop,

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<sup>310</sup> A. Georgiadou and D.H.J Larmour note that *Icaromenippus* is one of many Lucianic works that deals with the notion of ascending towards knowledge. They highlight the passage in *Astrology* wherein Lucian takes note of those who sought knowledge from the world above (*Astrol.* 13-19); *The Dream*, wherein Lucian himself flies about the world in a winged vehicle (*Somn.* 13-15) and notably the instance in the *VH* where the travellers visit the moon and are met by Endymion. (*VH.* 1.11) The implication of philosophical parody that they note in these works (see also *Hermotimus*) and others arguably solidifies the following proposal that *Icaromenippus* and *Charon* are texts that reject philosophical superiority. (A. Georgiadou, D.H.J Larmour, 'Lucian's "Verae Historiae" as Philosophical Parody' *Hermes* 126:3 (1998): 315-317, n.18) See too A. Billault, 'L'optique de Lucien,' *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé* 1 (2018) 72-88.

as he deduces that acquiring animal wings would be the means to get to the Heavens on the basis that “he [Aesop] makes Heaven accessible to eagles and beetles and now and then even to camels” (*Icar.* 10; Perry 135; 117).<sup>311</sup> Yet where the *Icaromenippus* motivates the character’s ascent to the heavens on the basis of dissatisfaction with philosophers, *Charon* is based more on notions of curiosity. The motivation for Charon’s ascent derives from Charon’s own confusion regarding the superficial desires of humankind, and the recognition of a lack of wisdom in the world below becomes clear only following the ascent. The consideration that the two dialogues engage with notions of inhuman ascent is nevertheless crucial in considering the overall goals of the dialogues. Charon, in a similar fashion to Menippus, gains the required vantage point based on precedent set out in the poetry of Homer, as the sons of Aloeus, Otus and Ephialtes, are presented as proving that the mountains can be stacked on top of one another to reach the Heavens’ vantage point (*Cont.* 3 ff; *Od.* 11.305 ff). These two particular means of ascent engage heavily with the literary tradition, and provide a believable process by which the characters are able to see the world from above. It is also significant, however, that both dialogues deal with the question of *how* to see from above, with the characters’ capacity for sight being insufficient to see clearly from such heights. Once again, this is rectified by reference to literary tradition and by means of the natural world; Menippus is taught to use his newly acquired wings in order to obtain the excellence in sight that is attributed to the eagle (*Icar.* 14ff.), and Charon once again uses the verses of Homer to “lift the veil” from his eyes (*Cont.* 7; *Il.* 5.127). This use of the natural world and literary precedent serves to further solidify Lucian’s critique of the pseudo-philosophers. In exceeding their traditional boundaries as a means to gain wisdom, the two characters take on something of a hybrid function, not only through their capacity to exist in two distinctly different spheres, but also through their adoption of inhuman or otherworldly characteristics in order to facilitate such movement. Their enlightened position following their respective excursions to the world above serves to present them as successful Lucianic hybrids, becoming something improved through the joining of two halves. In direct contrast, once again, the hybrid philosopher-sophist is positioned metaphorically and literally below the successfully hybridised characters.

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<sup>311</sup> Lucian here is referring to two extant Aesopic fables. The first, *The Eagle and the Dung-Beetle* details a disagreement between the Eagle and the Dung-Beetle, wherein the two animals are able to go to the Heavens and speak to Zeus himself in order to find a solution. (Perry, 3) The second involves the Camel going to Zeus to protest his lack of physical defences in comparison to other animals, and is punished for his ungratefulness by being forever endowed with small ears (Perry 117).



As will be shown in both this and the following chapter, the hybridity of the world below comes to have a direct effect upon the world above, with Lucian proposing that the philosopher-sophists have even corrupted the heavens.

### *Icaromenippus*

In Lucian's *Icaromenippus*, the title character of Menippus makes his ascent to the heavens by attaching to himself a wing of an eagle, and a wing of a vulture.<sup>312</sup> The main function of the eagle in the dialogue is to facilitate Menippus' ascent, and subsequently grant him clear vision. The eagle, states Aelian, is the ὀρνίθων ὀξύωπέστατος, and may be used by men to improve their own eyesight. This is achieved, states Aelian, by creating a mixture of an eagle's gall and honey (Ael. *NA*. 1.42). The bird is thus a clear choice for Lucian's Menippus, on the basis of his own acquisition of sharp sight later in the text, which is attributed to his use of the eagle wing (*Icar*. 14). In the context of the choice to combine the eagle and the vulture, it should be noted that it is not unheard of to have eagles and vultures paired in the same narrative, to the extent that ἀετός could be used to denote the vulture.<sup>313</sup> While vultures appear in a number of Homeric instances with reference to devoted parenthood, Heath notes that vultures and eagles

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<sup>312</sup> In the surviving corpus of Aesop's fables, the eagle appears frequently, often as a peripheral character representing strength and contest (Perry 22; 51; 507). These particular Aesopic fables reflect upon the notion of the inferior party defeating the supposedly superior party (Perry 135; 1), with the eagle often taking the role of the superior. One fable is of note here, as it features the crow deceiving the unsuspecting eagle through its capacity for trickery and deception (*The Eagle and the Crow*, Perry 490). This notion of the crow representing the trickster is repeated elsewhere in the fable collection, as in Perry 453, *The Crow, the Eagle and the Feathers*, a re-telling of the familiar Jackdaw fable (Perry 101) discussed in Chapter One. However in this fable, the crow's tricks are revealed, and despite attempting to deceive the other birds with his appearance, he is instead humiliated. The likeness of the crow's failed deception to the hybrid philosopher-sophists has been discussed previously, however in this context with the eagle being included as a protagonist, this likeness is further enhanced. Despite the crow being the traditional trickster, in Lucian's dialogue it is shown that the eagle, in the form of Menippus, proves far superior to the deceptive philosopher-sophists. The use of the vulture wing as well, holds a number of Aesopic connotations. Unlike the eagle, the vulture appears in few Aesopic fables, and even then this is often interchangeable with the raven. In these fables, the vulture is depicted (unsurprisingly) as a scavenger, having little shame in stealing the food from others, or inflicting misfortune upon other birds. One fable that diverges from this pattern is *The Dog and the Treasure*, wherein the vulture is shown to disparage his canine interlocutor for his greed (Perry 483). However the vulture in Aelian receives what may be considered a more varied role. There are three dedicated entries, the first of these characterising the vulture primarily by its role as a carrion animal, haunting battlegrounds and the enemy of νέκροι, not dissimilar to that found in the Aesopic tradition (Ael. *NA*. 2.46). Aelian states later in his work that not only is the vulture considered to be sacred by the Vaccaei, but it was also held in high regard during the founding of Rome (Ael. *NA*. 10.22), with Aelian also observing that the Egyptians consider the vulture to be sacred to Hera (Ael. *NA*. 10.22.12). Short of the vulture's capacity for flight, the significance of the vulture wing in *Icaromenippus* is difficult to determine, but it is nevertheless largely held in high regard, according to Aelian's accounts.

<sup>313</sup> D.W. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (London: Oxford, 1895) 5.

are both used in Homeric similes as ‘swooping’ birds, who prey on smaller birds,<sup>314</sup> aligning the two birds by their predatory function. Yet it should not be ignored that the use of both a vulture wing and an eagle wing in facilitating Menippus’ ascent is primarily a comic tool. The two birds are frequently used interchangeably; In the myth of Prometheus, classical sources use both ἀετός (Hes. *Th.* 523; Aesch. *Prom.* 1022, Apoll. Rh. 2.1254; Luc. *Prom.* 2, 4, 20.) and γύψ (Val. Fl. *Argon.* 7.357; Luc. *D. Deor.* 1; Luc. *Prom.* 20.) to denote the bird responsible for eternally eating his liver.<sup>315</sup> The association of both the vulture and the eagle with the liver (eating or otherwise) was common enough that Lucian’s own use of both of these birds is not remarkable, but rather another means to humiliate the philosopher-sophists. As mentioned above, the liver of the eagle may be used medicinally to gain enhanced sight, and although the same is true of the vulture,<sup>316</sup> however, the text of *Icaromenippus* quite explicitly excludes the vulture from aiding the sharpness of sight, as Empedocles explains, “the other eye [on the vulture wing side] cannot possibly help being duller, as it is on the inferior side” (*Icar.* 14). As the text progresses, the symbolism of taking two different wings becomes clear, as Menippus himself recognises that he has become a hybrid. Menippus, on discovering the power of the eagle’s wing, regrets his choice to take a wing from each bird. He is half-finished, he states, considering himself a cross-breed (νόθοις, *Icar.* 14). Empedocles,<sup>317</sup> however, disagrees. If he maintains control over the vulture wing, and flaps only the eagle wing, he will most certainly have sharpness of sight in the corresponding eye. With this, Menippus rationalises what he previously thought was a foolish error on his part. Carpenters, states Empedocles, in order to gain focus, often use a single eye to complete their work with accuracy, so thus it would not be unreasonable to suggest that he too, could utilise well his one superior eye (*Icar.* 14).

Despite Menippus’ explicit assertion that his adoption of the two different wings have made him a hybrid, his initial consideration that he is a corrupted form is swiftly dismissed. Recognising his own hybrid faults, Menippus makes no pretence in respect to his inferior vulture wing, but rather embraces his hybridity and utilises it in such a

<sup>314</sup> J. Heath, ‘The Serpent and the Sparrows: Homer and the Parodos of Aeschylus’ Agamemnon’ *Classical Quarterly* 49:2 (1999): 398.

<sup>315</sup> Aelian also makes mention of a certain type of vulture, *aegyptius*, which is “ἐν μεθωρίῳ γυπῶν ... καὶ ἀετῶν” (*NA.* 2.46.13-14). This eagle-vulture also makes an appearance in Aristotle’s *Historia Animalium* (8.609B.9ff.).

<sup>316</sup> Pliny states in his *Natural History* that mixing the gall of the vulture with leek-juice and a bit of honey provides a remedy for poor vision (Plin. *NH.* 29.38.50-52).

<sup>317</sup> The significance and role of Empedocles in this text is discussed further below.

manner to present a successful hybrid; in only having one eye to view clearly through, he is able to better focus his sight and see more accurately than he could if he did have two eagle-eyes to view from. The vulture and the eagle have a rich symbolic tradition throughout Greek and Latin literature.<sup>318</sup> Their medicinal properties clearly relate to their capacity in providing clarity of vision to a patient, and while their role as predators is certainly prominent, this is not the main symbolic function in the context of Lucian. Rather, the use of these animals becomes symbolic of the qualities unavailable to the human, or contemporary philosophical world. While the eagle assists the protagonist by granting him non-human capacities such as flight and sharp sight, the vulture may allow Menippus to accurately view the truth of the human world; the apparently inferior side providing a comparative focus from which to understand philosophical truths.

Georgiadou and Larmour attribute the use of a vulture and an eagle in *Icaromenippus* to the birds' association with Zeus, with reference to two other Lucianic texts, however emphasising the frequency with which Lucian utilises the bird to denote "philosophers disguised as animals,"<sup>319</sup> However, with these biological traditions in mind, I would rather argue that the symbolism of the vulture and the eagle (in this text) represent the qualities that the philosophers *lack*: explicitly the capacity for flight and clarity of vision, but symbolically, their lack of ability to have true wisdom and understanding of the human world. What's more, with Lucian positioning his characters in a literal interspace between the high and the low, the text reflects upon the very nature of his satire. It is a hybrid, to be sure, but it exists as a hybrid that may improve the very base nature of each animal to create an enhanced form that is better than the two halves; a successful and importantly, uncorrupted hybrid.

### *Empedocles*

In *Icaromenippus*, as mentioned above, the eagle and the vulture play a role in providing Menippus with the ocular means to view the earth. Having ascended above the human realm, Menippus states that he sat himself upon the moon and was able to see the life of humanity in its entirety (*Icar.* 12). Menippus explains to his interlocutor

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<sup>318</sup> A. Georgiadou, D.H.J Larmour, 'Lucian's "Verae Historiae" as Philosophical Parody', 321.

<sup>319</sup> A. Georgiadou, D.H.J Larmour, 'Lucian's "Verae Historiae" as Philosophical Parody' 321.

that this clarity of sight, however, was not innate. Menippus relates that he spoke with the philosopher Empedocles,<sup>320</sup> and requests of Empedocles to take away the fog (ἀχλύς; *Icar.* 14) from his eyes.<sup>321</sup> Empedocles reveals to him that the power of sharp sight may be achieved by flapping the wing of the eagle that is attached to him. Now being ‘sharp-sighted’ (ὀξυδερκής; *Icar.* 13) like the eagle, Menippus may truly view that which lies below him, a faculty that was denied him as human.<sup>322</sup>

While the interaction is only brief, the use of Empedocles in particular is significant for Lucian’s overall narrative. In addition to the treatment in *Icaromenippus*, Empedocles features as a character in three other Lucianic works: *True Histories*, *The Fisherman* and *Dialogues of the Dead*.<sup>323</sup> In these three texts, the focus is on Empedocles’ famous death by leaping into the crater of Mount Etna (*VH.* 2.21; *Pisc.* 2.13; *D. Mort.* 6.4). Diogenes Laertius relates the philosophical significance of this mythological death, with each re-telling denoting an aspect of Empedocles’ theoretical or actual ascent (D.L. 8.69-72). The ascension of Empedocles is also reflected in the extant fragments of what have been accepted by secondary scholars to be two philosophical works, *Purifications* and *On Nature*.<sup>324</sup> While the first of these, ‘On Nature’ is predominantly concerned with physics and the cosmic cycle, the ‘Purifications’ provides a Pythagorean poem on reincarnation and vegetarianism. The former work underpins his doctrines of natural philosophy, through the external perception of the earth from the position of the sun, and the suggestion that mankind develops into an elevated creature from the parts of animals.<sup>325</sup> From this point of reference, it is possible to reflect upon Lucian’s use of the natural philosopher. While in the majority of his works Empedocles features as a passing comment about his death-by-volcano, the context of these comments encourages consideration of the satirist’s

<sup>320</sup> The use of Empedocles can be attributed to the theme of philosophical parody that is evident in a number of Lucianic works. (A. Georgiadou and D.H.J. Larmour, ‘Lucian’s “Verae Historiae”’ 316.

<sup>321</sup> A clear reference to Athena removing the fog (ἀχλύς) from Diomedes’ eyes in the *Iliad* (*Il.* 5.127-8).

<sup>322</sup> With his sharp-sight being granted to him, Menippus observes that the population as viewed from above are like ants (μυρμήκων, *Icar.* 19.4ff), a largely laughable sight. The theme of humans as ants also appears in Lucian’s *Hermotimus*, wherein Hermotimus, the Stoic, explains his desire to ascend towards virtue (Αρετή) and this, to find happiness, a correlation that is explored in greater detail below.

<sup>323</sup> Empedocles also appears in *Peregrinus*, with his death being likened to that of Peregrinus (*Peregr.* 1.8) and in *The Runaways*, wherein again, the reference is related to the fact that the two characters died by fire (*Fug.* 2.4).

<sup>324</sup> P. Kingsley ‘Empedocles’ Two Poems’ *Hermes* 124:1 (1996): 108, working from the argument put forward by D. Sedley and H. Diels.

<sup>325</sup> J. Pollack, O. Primavesi and F. Pressler, ‘Empedocles’ in *Brill’s New Pauly*, Antiquity volumes edited by H. Cancik and H. Schneider (2006) ([http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347\\_bnp\\_e329950](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e329950)).

purpose. Consequently, the symbolism of Empedocles as a guide to viewing the world above in *Icaromenippus* may be further understood.

First, in *Dialogues of the Dead*, the now-dead Menippus is being offered a guided tour of the famous souls found in the Underworld. Empedocles appears following an appearance from his predecessor, Pythagoras, entirely burnt to ashes. He is accused of lying when claiming *melancholia* drove him to jump into the crater, with Menippus claiming it was in fact his vanity (*Dia. Mort.* 20). Conversely, in *The Fisherman*, the act of jumping into the crater is viewed as a punishment for the outspoken Parrhesiades, with Empedocles concurring with his fellow philosophers that he had brought harm to the reputation of philosophy (*Pisc.* 2). Finally, in the *True Histories*, Empedocles once again appears as burned, however he is characterised as being ostracised from the community of famous figures that live upon the idyllic island (*VH.* 2.21). It is implied that the island is where the philosophers who ascend towards virtue come to rest, as it is narrated that the Stoics had not arrived, as they continued to climb the “steep hill of virtue” (*VH.* 2.18). With these three rather different perceptions of Empedocles in mind, it is useful to return to Lucian’s *Icaromenippus*.

Unsurprisingly, the description of Empedocles being burned remains in *Icaromenippus*. However Empedocles relates to Menippus the circumstances of his death, stating that the smoke from the crater launched him upwards, bringing him to land upon the moon (*Icar.* 13). Empedocles has made his philosophical ascent, and may now act as a guide to the world above, despite being represented as harmful to philosophy in different dialogues. As mentioned earlier, Empedocles teaches Menippus that the flapping of his eagle wing will allow Menippus to become sharp-sighted, a recognition of Empedocles’ argument that mankind develops from the parts of animals (*Fr.* 21).<sup>326</sup> It is only by utilising the natural world, and the parts of animals that Menippus has been able to see the truth, suggesting a necessity to reject the anthropocentric notions that define the race of philosopher-sophists. Despite the fact that Menippus is now presented as a hybrid creature, his hybridity is framed as far more useful than that of the hybrids below, who are unable to recognise their own human limitations. In addition, unlike the usual representations of Empedocles in the

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<sup>326</sup> The fragment outlines that through the victory of love over strife, the inhabitants of the world, both humans and animals were born, through a mixing of various previously separated parts. For a detailed discussion of this concept in Empedocles, see G. Campbell, ‘Empedocles’ *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<https://www.iep.utm.edu/empeodocl/>).

Lucianic corpus, in *Icaromenippus* he becomes almost the epitome of the ideal philosopher. He is in touch with the natural world, even defining himself as ὁ φυσικός, and is capable of offering wisdom that acknowledges the limitation of the human condition. Empedocles, having ‘ascended’ to his position, is a crucial figure who assists in Menippus’ own ascent towards wisdom, ensuring that the full potential of his hybridised form is utilised.

This image of an ideal philosopher, a real philosopher, comes to satisfy some of the curiosities of the protagonist, a feat that the philosopher-sophists of the human world were unable to achieve. This contrast of the real philosopher, Empedocles, and the fake philosophers of the human world serves to expose the false professions of knowledge of the hybrid philosopher-sophists. This contrast again serves to underpin the different ‘kinds’ of hybridity that Lucian utilises throughout his dialogues. The Lucianic hybrid, represented by Menippus himself, has already exceeded the capacities of the hybrid philosopher-sophists, as a natural and uncorrupted hybrid.

### *Homer*

Having explored the means of ascent and clarity of sight in *Icaromenippus*, it is necessary to turn to Lucian’s *Charon*. In this dialogue, it is possible to identify similar themes involving ascent and sight, from which it can be gleaned that Lucian is once again utilising the trope to comment upon the shortcomings of the philosopher-sophists, and humans more broadly. In the context of *Charon*, there is a similar sense of lacking in an innate capacity to both ascend and to see clearly, however rather than Charon becoming a hybrid of animal and human, he is a hybrid figure in that he is able to occupy both the high and low physical spheres. While Charon is not strictly human he nevertheless moves beyond his traditional sphere, coming up from the underworld in order to observe and understand human want and desire. Hermes states that “one who consorts always with the shades” (*Cont.* 2) would not be permitted in the Heavens and thus proposes the manipulation of the natural world as a means to gain the high vantage point necessary to truly view the life of man, without completely overstepping his boundaries. The two characters thus use the poetry of Homer to stack the highest mountains atop each other and climb into the skies.<sup>327</sup> However in order to truly view

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<sup>327</sup> Hermes and Charon manipulate the mountains by reciting lines of Homer, ὁ ἀρχιτέκτων.

the human world, Charon likewise must gain sharp-sight. From their vantage point, Hermes and Charon are able to view the landscape in its entirety, but it is revealed that Charon cannot see anything clearly beyond the geological features. Hermes, again with the aid of the Homeric epics, makes Charon ‘sharp-sighted’, (ὄξυδερκέστατον *Cont.* 7.2) allowing him to see with clarity the world below, and thus to understand the life of humanity.

Recitation of Homeric verses may be found in a number of literary genres, both preceding Lucian and following. Collins discusses the trend of the Homeric verse being used as a form of incantation, intended to provide a solution to primarily medical problems.<sup>328</sup> The tradition, by the time of the Second Sophistic, is presumed to derive from the philosophers Pythagoras and Empedocles, as attested in Iamblichus’ *Life of Pythagoras*. Pythagoras, he states, utilised music and Homeric verses for the purpose of “correcting the soul,” a technique likewise picked up by Empedocles (Iamb. *VP.* 25). As the practice continued throughout antiquity, the magical properties of the context of the particular verse began to diminish, however during Lucian’s time of writing, the context of the verse still held importance for the effectiveness of the incantation, and consideration of this Homeric context within Lucian’s dialogue allows for the broader effect to be understood.

In *Charon*, Homeric incantation appears in two instances. The first of these, as mentioned earlier, allows the protagonist to reach a high vantage point, while the second facilitates clarity of sight. In order for the two characters to look down upon the world from above, Hermes suggests using the strategy of Aloadae, Otus and Ephialtes, who on account of their giant form were able to place the mountains Pelion and Ossa atop Olympus. Despite Charon’s protestations, Hermes states that it will be an easy task, on account of the work of Homer, for he puts the mountains together as easily as a pair of verses (*Char.* 4).<sup>329</sup> Reciting the Homeric verse, (*Od.* 11.305) Hermes swiftly

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It is worth noting that Charon, approaching his ascent to the peak of Parnassus, seeks Hermes’ aid in climbing the mountain, as the ‘machine’ (μηχανήν) is ‘not small’. This use of μηχανή, and the following characterisation of the two interlocutors being ‘fond of spectacles’ (φιλοθεάμονα) implies an element of spectatorship in viewing the world below. It should be noted too, that the adjective has both negative and positive connotations through its use in Plato’s *Republic*. The philosopher who is fond of spectacles should be wholly distinguished from the philosopher who is fond the spectacle of truth (*Rep.* 475c4). Here, Lucian’s own distinctions between the proper philosopher and the hybrid philosopher-sophist are supported, also shows the way in which the interlocutors of *Charon*, in viewing the world from above, are in this instance not simply fond of the act of viewing, but also the act of viewing truth.

<sup>328</sup> D. Collins, *Magic in the Ancient Greek World* (Malden: Blackwell, 2008), Malden, 104.

<sup>329</sup> Dio Chrysostom also draws upon such an idea, claiming that Homer’s art, as merely descriptive, lends itself to less praise than the capacity to change the shape of stone as Pheidias does (Dio. 12.79).

piles Mt. Ossa upon Mt. Pelion. Yet where the twins Otus and Ephialtes were unsuccessful in reaching the heavens, Hermes' invocation of the magical Homeric phrase allows them to achieve the task of the giants, and succeed in heightening the pile of mountains with Oeta and Parnassus.<sup>330</sup> The quotation derives from Odysseus' retelling of his experience in the underworld and his sightings of mythical women, in this case he relates seeing Iphimedeia, the mother of the two twins. The passage tells of their attempt to storm Olympus, and their defeat at the hands of Apollo while still only young (*Od.* 11.305ff).

The second Homeric incantation in *Charon* relates to the character's gaining of sharp sight. Once again, Hermes uses the verses to magically improve Charon's vision, quoting the instance in the *Iliad* wherein Athena removes the fog (ἀχλύς)<sup>331</sup> from Diomedes' eyes (*Il.* 5.127-28), allowing him to see with clarity.<sup>332</sup> Similarly, Charon's new-found sight will, throughout the course of the dialogue, allow him to not only see the world below, but also view the truth that those below are unable to see. The esteem of the philosopher-sophists and their unsubstantiated professions of wisdom is exposed as false through a recognition of the reality of mankind from above.<sup>333</sup>

In order to reach, and to see from, the heavens, the two characters of *Charon* require the aid of Homeric verse. The two instances of Homeric recitation chosen are significant for their emphasis upon breaching established spheres. The mist that clouds Charon's eyes may only be removed through the aid of the Homeric Athena, who has ventured from the heavens to the sphere of humanity. Likewise, the Aloadae aim to move beyond their position in the mortal sphere, and it is only through invocation of their mythological deeds that Charon and Hermes may attempt to reach the heavens in the mortal sphere. The two texts, when viewed as parallel readings of ascent, provoke a reflection upon perceptions of hierarchy of humans, animals and the divine in

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<sup>330</sup> While Homer only mentioned Pelion and Ossa as mountains used by the Aloadae, Hyginus does note that additional mountains were piled on in addition to the two. (*Hyg. Fab.* 28)

<sup>331</sup> Such a trope is present too in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*, namely 7.32.16 and 23.

<sup>332</sup> *Icaromenippus* too alludes to the aforementioned Homeric passage, however it does so merely with use of the word ἀχλύς to denote Menippus' need for removal of the mist from his eyes on account of his presently 'blurred' vision. (*Icar.* 14.1-2). Curiously, Collins demonstrates that following Lucian, the narrative context of the Homeric quotation is no longer an indication of the magical or healing properties of the passage. Rather, the use of Homeric recitation emphasizes the "attributes or qualities generally thought to be relation to the action of healing, protection, or, occasionally harm, that is desired." (D. Collins, 'The Magic of Homeric Verses,' 215; 217).

<sup>333</sup> Collins also notes that Proclus uses the same passage: "For Proclus and other Neoplatonists before him, the pure light that replaces the scattered mist allegorically refers to souls descended into bodies that can no longer directly contemplate reality" (D. Collins, 'The Magic of Homeric Verses' 127).



antiquity. As Collins argues, Homeric recitation employed on the basis of the divine inspiration that allowed for the poetry to be composed. “If,” he states, “Homeric poetry pre-eminently embodies the divinity which also inspired its expression, then select verses taken from Homer...still contained divine power.”<sup>334</sup> Charon and Hermes may only attempt to reach the divine sphere by utilising divine power, allowing Charon to breach the boundaries of even the mortal sphere. Charon arguably comes to occupy a hybrid space and it is here, like Menippus, that he is able to truly see mankind and its greed. It has been shown that in order to truly understand existence, one must be able to view from above, and these two dialogues of Lucian interact with this long-standing tradition by presenting characters who make a very literal ascent to the hybrid interspace between the heavens and the mortal realm. In the case of Menippus, the movement into this space requires a transformation to a hybrid form.

However this ascent must also be considered with the role of sight, as in both of these dialogues the characters are presented with the question of *how* to view from above. The nature of sight (and importantly of blindness) evokes connotations of the acquisition or removal of the faculty of sight is crucial for Lucian’s critique of the philosopher-sophists. Once again, Lucian utilises the simplicity of contrast to reflect upon the inherent blindness of the philosopher-sophists, through their inability to see as Menippus and Charon do. This blindness, it is argued, directly translates to a critique of their ignorance, and their unwillingness to pursue wisdom through the refinement of the hybrid form becomes a reflection upon their shortcomings. The philosopher-sophists, as corrupted hybrids, no longer aspire to wisdom, but to wealth and reputation, yet they nevertheless maintain their role as teachers in society. Both Charon and Menippus see human greed from above, showing the widespread and corrupting influence of the contemporary philosophers.

### *Inhuman Sight?*

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<sup>334</sup> D. Collins, *Magic in the Ancient Greek World*, 131. The Greek Magical Papyri too, show evidence of the verses of Homer maintaining their divine power (PGM IV. 2125-2240). For more on the significance of the papyri, see H. D. Betz, ‘The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells Volume 1’ Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986 and A.D. Nock, ‘Greek Magical Papyri’ *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 15:3/4 (1920) 219-235. The notion of Homer acting as an inspiration for divine power and magic in the Neoplatonic conception is also discussed extensively by R Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

In *Icaromenippus*, as in *Charon*, the word ἀχλύς is used to denote the fog which must be removed from mortal eyes to produce sharp sight.. The removal of the fog from Diomedes' eyes in the *Iliad* is not dissimilar to the fog that had previously clouded the sight of Menippus and Charon, and as will be explored, this sharpness of sight is thus portrayed as an inhuman quality.

The use of a high vantage point and the characters' subsequent gaining of sharp sight is a primary means to link these two texts.<sup>335</sup> However one further point must be considered, that being the explicit mention of Lynceus in both texts and his association with viewing outside the human world.<sup>336</sup> Lynceus' primary role in myth is as an Argonaut. His enhanced sight is his defining feature in Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica* (1.153, 4.1466ff) and is also found in Apollodorus' *Library*, which states that Lynceus' sharp sight (ὀξύδερκία) was so great that he was able to see underground (*Apollod.* 3.117).<sup>337</sup> In *Icaromenippus*, the *hetairos* with whom Menippus speaks questions his capacity for sight, asking how he has suddenly become a Lynceus, being able to view everything on the earth (*Icar.* 12.21-23). Charon likewise exclaims that in comparison to his newly acquired 'sharp sight', the mythical Lynceus was blind (*Cont.* 7.10). Lynceus, as a point of comparison for the characters of Menippus and Charon is clearly employed on the basis of his "piercing eyes" (ὀξέα, *A.R.* 4.1466) yet arguably also reflects upon the capacity to have such sight in a realm that exists outside of the human world.

Being granted enhanced, inhuman ocular capacity allows for the characters to view the world without human bias and to gain a greater understanding of philosophical

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<sup>335</sup> The association of having 'sharp sight' and viewing from a vantage point appears elsewhere (and often) in the Lucianic corpus. In discussing the customs of the symposium in *Saturnalia*, the wine pourer (ὄξυ δεδορκέτω ἐκ περιωπῆς; *Sat.* 18) The Pseudo-Lucianic *Philopatr* presents a similar overall theme to *Icaromenippus* and *Charon*, wherein Critias relates his journey to meet with the sorcerers in a high tower. Speaking with them, it is revealed that their vantage point looking down upon the city imbues them with sharp sight, and they are able to see the reality of human life. (*Philopatr.* 24ff.)

<sup>336</sup> Lynceus can also be found elsewhere in the Lucianic corpus. In *Timon*, Hermes speaks with the personified Riches, who states that even Lynceus would find it difficult to see who among the population deserved wealth (*Tim.* 25). Lynceus is also used to denote Hermetimus' superior sight in relation to viewing the true character of men (*Herm.* 20.25-26) Lynceus is also presented in strict opposition to the figure of the blind Phineus in both *Pro Imaginibus* and *Dialogi Mortuorum*. In the latter, Menippus states that the eyes of all those now in the Underworld are empty (κενά) and that οὐκέτ' ἂν εἴπῃν ἔχοις, τίς ὁ Φινεύς ἦν ἢ τίς ὁ Λυγκεύς (*D. Mort.* 9.4-5).

<sup>337</sup> His sharp sight is also found twice in Hyginus' *Fabulae*, who states that his ability to see beneath the earth may be rationalized by his proficiency at gold-mining; the large amount of gold that he was able to acquire was thought only to be explained by a supernatural power (*Hyg.* 14.12) Nevertheless, in the passages following, Lynceus is again attributed with sharp sight to the extent he was made 'lookout' upon the Argo. (*Hyg.* 14.32)

truths that are denied them upon the ground. Lucian's Menippus and Charon represent the inherently *human* incapacity to gain such sight,<sup>338</sup> for the characters require the aid of external spheres so as to achieve clarity of vision.

### Dialogues from Above

The theme of vision (and blindness) that dominates these two texts will be returned to later in the chapter, however for the present purposes it is useful to consider the concerns of the two protagonists and their interlocutors once they have reached their high vantage point. In doing so, it will become clear that the philosopher-sophists that populate the world below have constructed around themselves a false reality, and the real truths belong to the spheres above.

Menippus and Charon are only able to view the human world objectively by finding a means both to look upon the world from above and to do so with clarity, from which a more accurate perception of humanity may be found. From this perspective, humans are revealed to be utterly foolish in that which they consider valuable. Menippus observes those fighting each other over borders and revelling in their wealth, and is able to see the futility of it all (*Icar.* 18.ff). Charon likewise comments upon Croesus' desire to dedicate offerings of gold to the temple of Apollo, and looks down in disbelief at the foolishness of humanity's honour of gold. "Men are terribly stupid," he states, "since they have such a passion for a yellow, heavy substance" (*Cont.* 11). Charon and Hermes also go on to discuss the fates of men, and the foolishness of their concern for a web that has already been spun. The human perception of death and the afterlife is, to Charon, nonsensical – the character knows intimately that in death, all humans are stripped of their wealth and he fails to understand humanity's trivial concern with such things. These concerns with wealth that the two characters observe reflect both the degradation of society and the degradation of philosophy. As was established in Chapter One, one of the primary criticisms of the philosopher-sophists is their desire for wealth through the purchase of their false philosophies. With the truth being hidden from humanity's view, the populations that both Menippus and Charon

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<sup>338</sup> See also: Luc. *Anach.* 36.3 (Anacharsis is unable to understand Solon without ὁξὺ δέδορκυας) Luc. *Philops.* 15.5 (Tychiades, in recounting to his present interlocutor a conversation he had with Cleodemus, states that he finds it difficult to believe Cleodemus' story εἰ μὴ τὰ ὅμοια ὑμῖν ὁξυδορκεῖν ἔχω). Cleodemus is also defined as a Peripatetic philosopher (Luc. *Philops.* 6.11-12, 14.8-9).

observe are indeed shown to be foolish, but it is on account of the failure of contemporary philosophers to reveal the truth.

### *The Moon*

In *Icaromenippus*, we are offered the perspectives of two characters who inhabit the world above and their misapprehensions regarding the actions of humanity. The first of these is the personification of the Moon, who asks Menippus to pass on a message from her to Zeus. She speaks of her disdain towards the philosophers, on account of their “meddling tongues” (*Icar.* 21ff.). However it is first useful at this point to compare the concerns of the Moon in *Icaromenippus* to the journey to the moon in Lucian’s *True Histories*. Not only does the latter text offer another instance of ascent, but through this more descriptive journey, it is possible to determine the symbolism of the moon in the context of criticism of contemporary philosophical thought.

In Lucian’s *True Histories*, our adventurers are whirled into the air by a particularly violent gust of wind, eventually coming to rest at a large, shining sphere (later revealed to be the moon). The men are captured by surveying Vulture-Horses (Ἰππογύποι), who bring them to the King of the Moon, Endymion (*VH.* 1.11). With this short introduction, the parallels to be drawn with *Icaromenippus* are clear. The theme of ascent is in common, and the presence of the vultures, employed on the basis of their ability to spot strangers upon the moon, resembles the use of the vulture to facilitate sharpness of sight in the other text. The figure of Endymion and the adventurer’s encounter is also not unlike Menippus’ conversation with Empedocles. As Endymion describes the conflict between the moon and the sun he facilitates a means for both the characters and the reader to conceptualise a broader understanding of these warring sides. As Georgiadou and Larmour argue, this portrayal of the heavenly contest represents Lucian’s critical gaze towards contemporary philosophy.<sup>339</sup> The significance of the moon and its spokesperson is also significant in terms of its overall function. Lucian’s *VH* includes a mirror upon the moon as one of its primary characteristics, offering the ability to allow the viewer to see and hear everything upon the earth (*VH.* 1.26). The moon is treated in Lucian’s works as a privileged vantage point from which to view from above and is concerned with philosophical truth. This symbolism, albeit

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<sup>339</sup> A. Georgiadou, D.H.J Larmour, ‘Lucian’s “Verae Historiae” as Philosophical Parody’, 316.

far more explicit in *Icaromenippus*, is important for an assessment of Lucian's dismissal of the philosopher-sophists, as will be explored further through Menippus' dialogue with the Moon herself.

The Moon of *Icaromenippus* has developed contempt towards the philosophers. However this criticism, while still directed at the degradation of philosophy in contemporary times stems from the fact that the Moon has personally been targeted. Rather than discussing more important aspects of philosophical truths, the Moon states that she is fed up with the philosophers concerning themselves with her characteristics, be it her shape and size or the place from which her light is derived.<sup>340</sup> However the Moon's true abhorrence relates to the activities of these so-called philosophers at night, and how in contrast to their proclamations of virtue during the day, she is embarrassed to allow her light to illuminate their acts of adultery and thievery (*Icar.* 20-21). The notion of the so-called philosopher as debauched under the cover of darkness and behind closed doors is evidenced, as argued earlier, in Lucian's *Symposium*, paying credence to the Moon's claims. The sham-philosophers, these philosopher-sophists, neither concern themselves with knowledge of the truth, nor do they perpetuate the good reputation of the real philosopher. The Moon not only views their deeds from above, but may also perceive their ignorance. The Moon concludes that if Zeus will not destroy these philosophers, she will leave to find a place far away from them.

The Moon, in *True Histories*, is a place from which to view the world below. This idea is repeated in *Icaromenippus*, however in a slightly different manner. The Moon herself is the figure who views from above, and sees the truth despite the sophists' proclamations and professions of knowledge and virtue. This she keeps to herself, not thinking it to be fitting to expose the pursuits of the sophists. However if one were to ascend, to search for the truth of her existence themselves, it is then that they might understand the philosopher-sophists' *false* claims to knowledge and wisdom.

### *Hermes*

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<sup>340</sup> A clear example of this is Plutarch's work *Concerning the Face Which Appears in the Orb of the Moon*, which discusses such features of the moon alongside Plutarch's broader concern with a philosophical understanding of the soul and its ascent. (M. Trapp, *Philosophy in the Roman Empire: Ethics, Politics and Society*, (Abingdon: Routledge) 2007).

The *Charon* dialogue reflects similar concerns to that of Menippus in the *Icaromenippus* dialogue. Although the characters, Charon and Hermes, are unable to reach the heavens (*Cont.* 2), they nevertheless are able to see the nature of mankind and their obsession with material wealth from above. The characters' commentary upon humankind from above acts as a parallel to *Icaromenippus*' criticism of philosophers, albeit being set in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC. Charon, being imbued with the knowledge that wealth is not retained in the afterlife, experiences sheer bewilderment while viewing human greed, and reflects upon the basic tenets of human understanding. Once again, it is argued that the philosopher-sophists have corrupted the human world, imposing their own obsession with reputation upon broader society.

The primary figures that Charon and Hermes observe from atop the mountains are Croesus and Solon, a Lucianic recreation of one of the key events from Herodotus Book 1 (Hdt. 1.26-56).<sup>341</sup> The two observers look favourably upon Solon, who opposes Croesus' praise of gold over other substances (*Cont.* 10-11). For the two gods, such admiration for gold and wealth is entirely nonsensical, for they know well that not only does wealth have no import after death, but the use of wealth to extend or enrich life is completely foolish: the fates of humans are sealed (*Cont.* 13-14). Wealth, it is shown, affects the outcome of the fates only in negative terms for the injured party. Croesus, Cyrus and Polycrates arrogantly see themselves as fortunate men, thus blinding themselves to the threats to their existence (*Cont.* 13-14).

By viewing the fates of these men from a perspective above the earth, it is made abundantly clear to Charon and Hermes that mankind is ignorant. The two interlocutors, upon viewing the masses, notice the presence of unseen objects, flying about the heads of the humans below. These are revealed by Hermes to be a conglomeration of "Hope, Fear, Ignorance, Pleasure, Covetousness, Anger, Hatred and their like," of which Ignorance, Stupidity and Doubt swirl about on the level with humans (*Cont.* 15). The masses also do not see the thread of fate hovering above them, many of them tangled up in each other indicating who will enact their death and to whom their inheritance will be given. The masses, therefore, are likewise blind to their own existence, and are

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<sup>341</sup> There is extensive secondary scholarship on this particular passage of Herodotus, namely S. O. Shapiro, 'Herodotus and Solon' *Classical Antiquity* 15: 2 (1996): 348-364; C. Chiasson, 'The Herodotean Solon' *Greek and Roman Biblical Studies* 27 (1983): 249-262; R. Lattimore, 'The Wise Adviser in Herodotus,' *Classical Philology* 34 (1939): 24-35.

unable to see the truth, and it is in their ignorance that they act in such a foolish manner (*Cont.* 17).<sup>342</sup> It is only from Charon and Hermes' high vantage point that they may view the reality of the human world, symbolising the incapacity of the philosopher-sophists to encourage humankind towards a path of knowledge.

## Vision and Blindness

The two texts are clearly dominated by the theme of sight, yet they also engage with notions of blindness. Throughout antiquity, vision and viewing was a common theme; as Morales outlines, the emphasis upon sight and spectatorship can be identified in both the Homeric epics, and Herodotean inquiry.<sup>343</sup> For the present purposes, it is worthwhile to examine the vision motif in the context of the Second Sophistic period more broadly. The concept of vision as attested in philosophical and physiological sources is largely involved with the notion of touching the thing seen, be this extramissively or intromissively.<sup>344</sup> For Chrysippus, and the Stoics more broadly, the "authoritative part of the soul" (τὸ ἡγεμονικόν *SVF* 2.866) emanates as a stream of fire from the eye so as to touch and illuminate the object seen, granting the capacity of sight. The Platonic notion of vision includes this extramissive method, yet also includes an emanation from the object viewed, which is then transmitted to the soul (Pl. *Tim.* 45Bff.). Morales argues that this allows vision to be attached to "desire, mirroring and self-knowledge."<sup>345</sup> Vision and sight, as evidenced in the Cave analogy, is the antithesis of blindness, and ascent away from darkness provides the means for sight and thus, knowledge. However among authors of the Roman Empire, this relationship between vision and knowledge is arguably more reciprocal and subjective, as evidenced most

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<sup>342</sup> Hermes gives the example of a man who, labouring over the building of a roof, subsequently falls off it once it has been completed, showing the inherent foolishness of humanity's greed and pride, as death may occur at any time.

<sup>343</sup> H. Morales, *Vision and Narrative in Achilles Tatius* (Leucippe and Clitophon) (Cambridge University Press: 2004) 8-10.

<sup>344</sup> H. Morales, *Vision and Narrative*, 15-16. Morales states of visual theory during the Roman Empire "constructs vision as corporeal and haptic." The Stoics, Ptolemy and Galen view sight as involving the projection of air from the eye to touch the object being seen (extramissive sight) while the atomists consider the object being seen as projecting particles so as to touch the viewer's eye. (intromissive sight). Plato's *Timaeus* combines the notions of extramissive and intromissive sight; the stream of fire from the eyes and the stream of fire from the object meet in the middle and hits the soul (*Tim.* 45Bff). For more on the ancient conceptions of viewing, see M. Squire, *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) and J. Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>345</sup> H. Morales, *Vision and Narrative*, 17.

emphatically in Lucian's *de Domo* and Philostratus' *Imagines*. The two texts expound the theory of viewing as providing knowledge, but also suggest that one's knowledge affects the very act of viewing. This reciprocity of viewing allows for the transmission of ideas and concepts. The vision motif is thus important for understanding vision as a means for truth and knowledge.

*Icaromenippus* and *Charon* are not alone in the Lucianic corpus for their exploration of vision. Anderson comments briefly on Lucian's use of the theme, and divides instances of viewing into three main categories: 'miraculous vision', 'views from a vantage point' and 'spying on immoral behaviour'.<sup>346</sup> In addition to those found in *Icaromenippus* and *Charon*, it is beneficial to explore other instances that may be identified as 'views from a vantage point'.<sup>347</sup> The most apparent of these is undoubtedly Lucian's fictitious journey to the moon in the *VH*, which has been discussed above. A view from a vantage point is also predicted for the primary character in *Hermotimus*, who aspires to reach the dwelling place of Virtue itself through the study of philosophy. Mankind will appear to be like ants, now that he is so far above the earth (*Herm.* 5.14-15).<sup>348</sup> As has been evidenced in Chapter One, the view from above in a philosophical context is also found in *The Fisherman*, wherein Parrhesiades views the 'fish' from his position upon the Acropolis. *The Fisherman's* 'fish' represent the ignorant philosopher-sophists, making it likely that the figures upon whom Menippus and Charon look down are similarly indicative of ignorance, and false philosophical knowledge.

Viewing, especially from above, may be seen as a means for many characters in Lucian's works to gain increased wisdom. However, it also features as a means to reveal the cognitive blindness of others. Where Menippus and Charon have been granted sharpness of sight, and thus wisdom, the philosopher-sophists that remain in the human sphere are comparatively blind.

While a more comprehensive of Menippus' actual arrival and experience of the Heavens is discussed in the following chapter, it is worth briefly discussing the time

<sup>346</sup> G. Anderson, *Lucian: Theme and Variation in the Second Sophistic* (Leiden: Brill, 1976) 16-17.

<sup>347</sup> A. Georgiadou, D.H.J. Larmour, 'Lucian's "Verae Historiae" as Philosophical Parody, 316-318

<sup>348</sup> While there is no indication of exactly where the dwelling place of Virtue is, according to both Lucian and Hesiod, it certainly resides above the human world (Hes. *Op.* 289; Luc. *Herm.* 2.16ff.). Lucian's *Verae Historiae* also refers to this Stoic ideal of ascending to Virtue when recounting those he sees residing on the fictional island, stating that the Stoics were absent as "ἐτι γὰρ ἐλέγοντο ἀναβαίνειν τὸν τῆς ἀρετῆς ὄρθιον λόφον" (Luc. *VH.* 18.7-8).



spent with the gods, as it serves to reinforce the concerns of both the Moon, and Menippus himself. Upon arriving in the Heavens, Menippus expresses concern about his hybrid form; while his eagle wing would grant him sure passage, the wing of the vulture would not be so accepted (*Icar.* 22). Not willing to take the risk, Menippus politely knocks, and is shortly afterwards permitted entry. Menippus relays the concerns of the Moon, emphasising the unsatisfactory nature of the philosophers due to their lack of knowledge about the Heavens (*Icar.* 23). Zeus, impressed with Menippus' ability even to reach the heavens (exceeding the efforts of Otus and Ephialtes), invites him to stay the night, so that Zeus may learn about the human world. It is on the second day of Menippus' visit to the Heavens that Zeus calls an assembly, so as to address the problems of the contemporary philosophers. Here, it is revealed that it is in fact the influence of philosophical ignorance that may account for this diminished dedication. Zeus earlier expresses similar concerns to the Moon, (*Icar.* 20ff.) and states that the philosophers divide themselves up into schools, call themselves by various names, and:

Then, cloaking themselves in the high-sounding name of Virtue, elevating their eyebrows, wrinkling up their foreheads and letting their beards grow long, they go about hiding loathsome habits under a false garb, very like actors in tragedy; for if you take away from the latter their masks and their gold-embroidered robes, nothing is left but a comical little creature hired for the show at seven drachmas.

(*Icar.* 29.17-26)

The philosopher-sophists and their false professions of knowledge have become a threat not only to the human capacity for virtue, but also to their dedication to the gods. They “look with scorn on all mankind and they tell absurd stories about the gods”, (*Icar.* 30.1-2) and are “creaturely things” (ταῦτα τὰ θρέμματα *Icar.* 31.17) in their behavior. Zeus views the race of philosophers as thinking themselves to be the source of knowledge and virtue, but this is merely on account of their appearance as real philosophers. Once again, contemporary philosophers are defined by their desire for wealth and money, as Zeus asks (in an echo of the Moon's concerns) once they are out of the public eye, “how can one describe how much they eat, how much they indulge

their passion and how they lick the filth off pennies?” (*Icar.* 30). The philosopher-sophists are driven by greed, no longer striving towards virtue.

With this trait of the philosopher-sophists in mind, it is a small stretch to consider similar concerns addressed in *Charon*. Charon also becomes aware of the self-proclaimed superiority of humankind. He states that those with wealth and power are “disdainful of the rest” (*Cont.* 13) and that “the multitude” (τὴν...πληθὺν) act as if they reside in hives: “Everyone has a sting of his own and stings his neighbour, while some few, like wasps, harry and plunder the meaner sort” (*Cont.* 15). The philosopher-sophists seek only to live for their own gain, and rely wholly on furthering their own reputation among the masses. In reality, they only appear to have the wisdom afforded philosophers, but their corruption of the masses through their appearance is of little concern, provided they are able to find renown. It is shown that in their ignorance, these contemporary philosophers think themselves superior to the rest of the world, yet since they do not have knowledge, they are the slaves to ignorance and deceit (*Cont.* 2).

Hermes makes one exception to his claims about the ignorance of mankind, those who are devoted to truth, as they see clearly (ὁξὺ δεδορκότες; *Cont.* 21), the ὁξὺ referring back to the sharpness of sight that Charon himself acquired earlier in the dialogue. Additionally, they “stand separate” (ἀποσπᾶσαντες) from the rest, the same verb being used in *Icaromenippus* to denote Menippus’ separation from the clouds as he ascends to the vantage point (*Icar.* 11). Those who keep themselves separate from the masses, are considered neither ignorant nor imbued with human folly. Their sharp sight and detachment from human existence allows for them to view the world as it is. Through this parallel analysis, it may be proposed that Lucian’s *Charon* likewise questions the validity of philosophers. The philosopher-sophists, as they are depicted in *Icaromenippus*, are neither “better than the rest of us who walk the earth,” nor are they “sharper sighted than their neighbours” (*Icar.* 6.5-6), unlike those who in *Charon* are truly dedicated to the truth.

As the two texts reveal, standing separately from the rest of humanity and philosophy is an essential means to gain sharp sight. The emphasis upon sight in the two dialogues encourages a comparative consideration of the role of blindness, and it is clear that Lucian means to characterise the philosopher-sophists as blind, and thus ignorant. In order to gain this sharpness of sight (and thus wisdom), the characters are shown to make an ascent, eventually coming to understand the truth of mankind and the heavens.

However one must also not only desire to learn the truth, but also recognise ignorance, characteristics that are attributed to Lucian's Menippus and Charon, but the philosopher-sophists lack. Their own perceived superiority, and desire to maintain this such a lofty reputation, has placed fog over their eyes, removing their capacity to see the truth. Menippus observes that the philosopher-sophists are also entirely contradictory in their varying doctrines, yet expect to be able to persuade him of their philosophical disposition (*Icar.* 5. 18-22). Menippus however, is incapable of refuting or accepting entirely any of these doctrines, and it is acceptance of ignorance that facilitates his ascent. Similarly, Charon states that: "I know nothing at all about things above ground, being a stranger" (*Cont.* 2) professing his lack of knowledge and need for guidance. Humans, according to Charon, live in ignorance of the fates that have been spun for them, resembling little more than "bubbles in water" (*Cont.* 19) and leaves (*Cont.* 19, *Il.* 6.146). However as the character of Croesus reveals, they nevertheless believe they are capable of having power over the natural course of things. *Charon* shows the folly of humans, desiring wealth over virtue, and taken in consideration with the *Icaromenippus* dialogue, it is clear that this shift in human concerns can be attributed to the shift in the value of philosophical discourse. The corruption of the philosopher-sophist hybrid, in the context of these two dialogues, is spreading to corrupt both the elite and non-elite alike. Lucian's dialogues speak to both of these audiences simultaneously, recognising their hybrid nature, and proving once again his successful hybrid is indeed superior to each of its two halves.

## Chapter Five

### Hybrid Gods

*Science can destroy religion by ignoring it as well as by disproving its tenets. No one ever demonstrated, so far as I am aware, the nonexistence of Zeus or Thor, but they have few followers now.*

*Childhood's End*, Arthur C. Clarke

In the previous chapters, it has been established that the hybrid presents itself frequently throughout Lucian's works, and is consistently utilised to critique the philosopher-sophists who dominate Lucian's contemporary culture. In the following chapter, the analysis of the hybrid continues this trend, however progresses beyond the heights considered in Chapter 4. The hybrid and corrupted nature of the philosopher-sophists, it is shown, has not only spread to the humans and made them driven by reputation and greed, but it has also become a source of corruption for the divine sphere. As shown in the previous chapter, Lucian distinguishes between the divine and the human sphere, showing that it is only from a higher vantage point that one is to understand human nature accurately. This distinction is further developed in the following chapter, as Lucian also offers a direct portrayal of the divine sphere itself. Importantly, we are shown the effect that the hybrid, corrupted philosopher-sophists have upon the perception of the gods.

Newmeyer states, in the context of assessing the role of the animal as the other, that "the Homeric concept of otherness posits a sharper distinction between the divine and the mortal, than between human and non-human: in the world of Homeric epic, human beings are reckoned to be more like other animals than they are like the gods."<sup>349</sup> In what follows, I discuss a number of Lucian's dialogues that are concerned with the divine sphere, outlining the way in which they question this division between humanity and divinity. The philosopher-sophists, it is shown, have not only corrupted the human sphere, but also the divine, disrupting the divide between these two spheres. Lucian, as has been shown, frequently includes hybrid animals throughout his works, yet what is crucial is that rather than exclusively depicting hybrid animals and humans, Lucian includes the voices of hybrid deities. Given the context in which these hybrid deities are portrayed, it is argued that we are offered a reflection upon relationship between the

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<sup>349</sup> S. Newmeyer, 'Being One and Becoming the Other' in *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life*, edited by G. L. Campbell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) 508.

human and divine sphere. Not only have the philosopher sophists corrupted the human world, but they have also corrupted the divine sphere, causing the impressionable humans not to dedicate themselves to gods, but rather favouring worship of the philosopher-sophists.

As the previous chapter has shown, the hybrid philosopher-sophists corrupt the humans with their claims to false knowledge, encouraging them to place value on reputation and greed, as they themselves do. The hybrid deities that now occupy the Olympian heavens are cast as corruptions themselves, having been influenced, not unlike the humans below them, by the philosopher-sophists. Rather than the presence of hybrid gods as reflecting a Lucianic distaste with hybrid deities, the presence of hybrid gods serves to exemplify the problem with the philosopher-sophists. The false philosopher-sophist hybrids are poor replicas of the true philosopher, and have fooled everyone into thinking they are a source of true wisdom.<sup>350</sup>

In assessing the use of hybrid deities in Lucian, it is necessary to analyse a few core dialogues, namely those that are situated primarily in the divine sphere. The following discussion assesses the presence of hybrid deities in the companion dialogues *Parliament of the Gods* and *Zeus Tragoedus*. These dialogues, it is shown, liken the state of the divine sphere to that of the human world. These hybrid gods are a corrupted mix, and it is clear that they stand as a metaphor for the corruption of the philosopher-sophists. They are made up of false representatives and merely give the impression of wisdom in a strive to attain reputation and honour. This, as has been argued, is the opposite of a successful hybrid form,<sup>351</sup> and acts in this instance as an allegorical commentary upon the state of philosophy in the world below.

It is also useful to return to the final third of *Icaromenippus* in this context, as in this dialogue it is possible to observe the hybrid state of the Olympian sphere through the representation of Zeus and the infiltration of the mortal Menippus. The relationship between the actions of the philosophers and the composition of the divine sphere is

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<sup>350</sup> Spickermann discusses the notion of animal gods and wisdom, outlining that Lucian is against the Plutarchan assertion that deities in animal form are capable of embodying divine wisdom, with Lucian choosing to favour the Greek pantheon over the foreign gods (W. Spickermann, 'Lukian von Samosata und die fremden Götter' *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 11:1 (2009): 246-8). While Lucian's use and critique of specifically foreign gods is assessed in the following discussion, the focus is the *use* of these gods as means to reflect upon the nature of Greek gods, the foreign gods acting as a point of comparison, rather than a direct critique.

<sup>351</sup> The successful form of the hybrid had been outlined previously in Chapter One.

once again emphasised, and it is shown that the philosopher-sophists are not only responsible for the corruption of the divine sphere, but also for the diminished dedication of humans towards the gods themselves. In the final section of this chapter, the effect of the philosopher-sophists upon both the human and the divine sphere is illustrated through the Lucianiac characterisation of Peregrinus. In this work, Peregrinus is portrayed as a Christian-Cynic hybrid, devoted entirely to enhancing his own reputation and being revered as a god. This so-called divine man typifies the transition from dedication to the gods to dedication to false philosophers, and the commitment to reverence over true wisdom paints Peregrinus as the essence of the corrupted philosopher-sophist. The hybrid Peregrinus reflects precisely Lucian's concern with the hybridity of the philosopher-sophists more broadly, and the portrayal of Peregrinus in the guise as a divine man underpins the effects that these hybrids have upon the perception of the divine sphere.

These facets of the hybrid deity in Lucian's works, and the insinuation that philosophical corruption has infiltrated the divine sphere, becomes especially significant when viewed through the Aesopic framework. The Aesopic fable, both in antiquity and in modern times, is strongly associated with the presentation of a moral, a lesson in human nature depicted through animal characters.<sup>352</sup> It is this notion of morality that is significant in the context of the divine sphere, as the relationship between corruption of the human world and the diminished dedication to the gods offers a curious interpretation of the broader role of the philosopher-sophists. With the notion that the hybrid philosopher-sophists have corrupted the divine sphere, and the gods themselves being shown to lament their diminished dedication, there is the suggestion of a shift in the moral compass of broader society. Rather than looking to the Aesopic fables as a set of guidelines for morality, the path to virtue is instead guided by the principles of the philosopher-sophists. The false philosophers' influence upon the human sphere has diminished the perceived value of the divine sphere, causing dissent within the divine sphere regarding appropriate and deserved worship. In reflecting upon the now-corrupted and hybrid nature of the divine sphere, Lucian proposes a return to

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<sup>352</sup> As Legras aptly states: The fable (λόγος, μῦθος) has an intrinsically moral character that allows teachers to offer their students a scale of values, rules of conduct, precepts of practical morality. « La fable (λόγος, μῦθος) présente en effet un caractère intrinsèquement moral qui permettait aux maîtres de proposer à leurs élèves une échelle de valeurs, des règles de conduite, des préceptes de morale pratique » (B. Lagras, 'Morale et société dans la fable scolaire Greque et Latine d'Égypte' *Cahiers du Centre Gustave Glotz* 7 (1996) : 52.

Golden Age ideals for the divine sphere as well as the mortal sphere. This is not to suggest that Lucian has any particular alignment with one pantheon of gods, but rather that the worship of philosopher-sophist hybrids over those truly in the divine sphere represents a corruption of virtue, and of wisdom.

## Hybrid Deities

The hybrid deity is a feature of many cultures throughout antiquity, the combined (often animal-human) form acting as a symbolic means to bridge the divine and human world,<sup>353</sup> or in several instances in the Judeo-Christian tradition, representing an other-worldly astral and magical power.<sup>354</sup> Such traits are evident in the Egyptian pantheon, as the gods frequently appear in a zoomorphised form, adopting the head of a particular animal.<sup>355</sup> The combined animal-human form that characterises many Egyptian gods is a core feature of the following discussion, and while the why and how of Egyptian animal worship is not detailed here,<sup>356</sup> it is important to consider the symbolism of such worship given its reception by the Greco-Roman world. As we will see, the hybrid deity in this context is a frequent means for authors of antiquity to denigrate the character of an individual or group,<sup>357</sup> due to the more general conception towards these Egyptian gods in the Roman Empire. The hybrid deity, for Lucian, is a false deity that serves merely to corrupt the pantheon of gods, concerned more with their reputation than with being a source of virtue and morality.

Smelik and Hemelrijk's overview of the conception of the Egyptian pantheon offers a significant starting point for the following discussion, especially in the context of critique of Egyptian animal worship during the development of Christianity.<sup>358</sup> The

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<sup>353</sup> E. Aston, *Mixanthrôpoi: Animal-human hybrid deities in Greek religion* (Belgium: Centre International d'Étude de la Religion Grecque Antique, 2011): 22.

<sup>354</sup> Z. Ameisenowa, 'Animal-Headed Gods, Evangelists, Saints and Righteous Men' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 12 (1949): 21-45.

<sup>355</sup> K. A. D. Smelik and E. A. Hemelrijk, 'Who Knows Not What Monsters Demented Egypt Worships? Opinions on Egyptian animal worship in Antiquity as part of the ancient conception of Egypt' in *ANRW II*, 1861. See too J. Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007) esp. Chapter 2.

<sup>356</sup> For a brief commentary on this, see H. te Velde, 'A Few Remarks upon the Religious Significance of Animals in Ancient Egypt', *Numen* :27 (1980): 76-82.

<sup>357</sup> K. A. D. Smelik and E. A. Hemelrijk note the occurrence of such an invective use in the context of Vergil's denigration of Marc Antony, as he the "Roman abhorrence of Egyptian theriomorphic gods in order to create a hostile feeling towards Anthony and Cleopatra" (K. A. D. Smelik and E. A. Hemelrijk, 'Who Knows not What Monsters Demented Egypt Worships?', 1855).

<sup>358</sup> Given the extent of secondary scholarship on Greek religion and its development, this aspect of the divine sphere is not treated here, but rather the focus is upon the means by which religion is perceived



animal worship of the Egyptians provided a means for Christian writers, such as Theophilus (*Ad Autolyicum* 1.10) to highlight the foolishness of the pagan pantheon, asserting that animal worship is the “grossest absurdity paganism had ever produced.”<sup>359</sup> This drive by a number of Christian writers to utilise the hybridity of the polytheistic pantheon as a core attribute of their own apologetics shows the consistent use of the hybrid form as a means of denigration of the other, particularly in the context of religion. Lactantius, writing in the late third/early fourth centuries, states explicitly that Christianity and its followers cannot be considered irreligious, since “other men in other places worship trees and rivers, and mice and cats and crocodiles and many irrational animals” (Lact. *Divinae Institutiones* 5.21). Yet significantly, this use of the animal hybrid god is similarly used by non-Christian writers, utilising it as a means to denigrate Christianity and Judaism as a means to accentuate the lack of depth found in the monotheistic beliefs.<sup>360</sup> Gilhuis expands upon the relationship of the hybrid to Christianity, noting that while the religion and its practitioners distance themselves from an association with the corrupted animal hybrid, it is nevertheless treated as a symbolic hybrid of Paganism and Judaism.<sup>361</sup> The followers of Christianity acknowledge this hybridity, directly utilising it as a means of critiquing their aggressors, noting the absurdity of their claims of a Christian, hybrid god. The suggestion of such a deity in the Christian sphere is a reflection not upon the hybridity of their god, but rather, upon the hybridity of paganism itself.<sup>362</sup> The hybrid deity as a means of critique during the rise of monotheism in Greco-Roman society is therefore a useful consideration in the context of the Lucianic hybrid, particularly given the varied and malleable means in which it is utilised. In denigrating a deity or deities, there is the suggestion that the critique extends to those who dedicate themselves to the deity in question. It is this polemic use of hybrid deities in early Roman Empire literature that

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during the Second Sophistic, and its particular use by Lucian in his satire. For a more comprehensive treatment of the role of Greek religion throughout the Greek and Roman worlds, see W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Malden: Blackwell, 1985); J-P Vernant *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); J. B. Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007); H.S. Versnel, *Coping with the Gods: Wayward Readings in Greek Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

<sup>359</sup> K. A. D. Smelik and E. A. Hemelrijk, ‘Who Knows not What Monsters Demented Egypt Worships’ 1989.

<sup>360</sup> K. A. D. Smelik and E. A. Hemelrijk, ‘Who Knows not What Monsters Demented Egypt Worships’ 1990.

<sup>361</sup> Gilhuis, I.S. *Animals, Gods and Humans: Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman and Early Christian Ideals* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006) 230.

<sup>362</sup> Gilhuis, I.S. *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 236.

provides a basis from which to develop an analysis of Lucian's works concerning the gods. The contest between right and wrong deities offers a useful tool for comparison when considered in the context of dedication to the gods, or dedication to divine men. The hybrid deities, in Lucian's works, are not even being worshipped, but rather the hybrid philosopher-sophists have adopted the mantle of worthy dedication. Their corruption of the human sphere is shown to have leaked into the divine sphere, corrupting it by offering an alternative that is in essence, nothing but a gross absurdity of the pure philosophical form.<sup>363</sup>

It is important to note that the foreign hybrid deity is not strictly the focus in the following discussion, as while foreign religions do indeed feature in Lucian's presentation of the hybrid deity, this is argued to be a reflection not of the corrupted nature of external pantheons of gods, but rather the Greek pantheon itself. What follows provides a brief outline of the presence of the hybrid form in the Hellenic pantheon of gods and divinities, allowing a deeper understanding of Lucian's use of hybrid deities. The presence of foreign hybrid gods becomes somewhat secondary to Lucian's critique, as a more targeted critique of Hellenic hybridisation becomes clear. The problem is not that hybrid gods are infiltrating the divine sphere, but rather that hybrid philosophers are corrupting the world above. The philosopher-sophists have effected a change upon the composition of the divine sphere, by actively seeking to diminish the belief in the gods. What's more, the response from the divine sphere is to adopt the same hybridity that has corrupted philosophy; the gods are now more concerned with the appearance of wisdom and providence, ignorant of their own burgeoning hybridity.

Hybrid deities, it should be noted, are neither new nor uncommon by the time of Lucian's writing. For purposes of clarity, I have chosen to continue using the term 'hybrid' as a means to categorise these deities and objects of worship, however it is crucial to highlight that Aston, from whom I draw, prefers the term 'mixanthropic'.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>363</sup> It is important to note that this critique against hybrid deities is not restricted to the Second Sophistic period. The hesitance towards or even fear of hybrid deities, as Clark outlines, pervades many texts of antiquity, namely Vergil *Aeneid* (8.698), who describes Egyptian gods as monstrous, Plutarch, who states that worship of animal gods lead "the weak and innocent into 'superstition', (*On Isis and Osiris*. 71) and Philostratus' *VA*, wherein Apollonius states that the animal form of the Egyptian gods makes them "ridiculous" (6.9) (S.R.L. Clark, 'Animals in Classical and Late Antique Philosophy' in *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 43). See too I. S. Gilhuis, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 55.

<sup>364</sup> E. Aston, *Mixanthropoi*, 12ff, esp. 14. Aston's concerns with the term 'hybrid' relate precisely to the symbolic nature of the term, stating that it does not reflect hybridity of form, nor does it give any indication of a specific human-animal hybrid. As has been shown throughout this dissertation, the use

The main focus of the following discussion looks at the inherent hybridity of many figures of the Greek pantheon, encouraging the view that despite Greek and Roman dismissal of the foreign pantheons and their hybrid gods, it is clear that a number of hybrid deities receive a form of worship within Greek religion. The mere presence of hybrid deities therefore, is neither unusual nor disparaged, but rather, Lucian utilises their hybrid forms to reflect upon the nature of hybridity itself and its relationship to the human sphere. Significantly, the hybrid deities of Lucian's works are not merely hybrids, but they embody the features of the corrupted hybrid, and are as concerned with their reputation and value as the philosopher-sophists below, owing to a shift in the very nature of divine worship towards a worship of the pseudo-philosophers.

Aston's book, *Mixanthropoi: Animal-human hybrid deities in Greek religion*, provides a comprehensive and informative analysis of the presence and symbolism of hybrid gods, and thus it is neither necessary nor productive to replicate this analysis here. However, there are a number of key aspects of her work that deserve further discussion, particularly in relation to the representation of hybrid deities and the cult worship surrounding their hybrid forms. Core to this is the concerted distinction of the mixanthrope from the monster – and it is this aspect of her discussion that is of greatest significance to the following analysis. Corrupted monsters differ from mixanthropes in three primary ways; they are incapable of imbuing humans with morality, they do not shirk their remote and otherly nature and are, crucially, considered plural entities, rather than individuals.<sup>365</sup> This, it is argued, is adopted by Lucian to great effect, as his inclusion of hybrid deities serves to stand in stark contrast to the 'monstrous' deities. The successful hybrid, the singular entity, exists separately from the corrupted masses, casting the philosopher-sophists not only as hybrids, but monsters.

The hybrid deity has a number of different forms. Their hybridity is reflected primarily in their representation, either as deities who are able to transform themselves into animals, or those whose forms are quite literally hybridised, adopting elements of the animal world to facilitate their role in the divine sphere. It is this latter type of hybrid

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of the word hybrid in this context does indeed reflect these features, and given its direct relationship to Lucian's work, the term 'hybrid' is utilised.

<sup>365</sup> Given the focus of this chapter, it is worth briefly noting the Platonic perceptions of hybrid deities. A hybrid deity, for Plato and those succeeding him, is in its essence a false deity. A true god, should be "eternal, unchanging, non-composite, uncontaminated by matter" (Plut. *De. E.* 393e ff; N. Roubekas, *An Ancient Theory of Religion: Euhemerism from Antiquity to the Present* (Routledge: Abingdon, 2017) 80). Such a definition also aligns well with the notion outlined in this chapter of differentiating between singular and plural deities; a true deity must act in a uniform and unified manner (Pl. *Tim.* 28).

that is discussed, for while divine metamorphosis certainly features frequently in mythological accounts, the focus here is not upon the fluidity and impermanence of the hybrid, but rather on its ability to occupy a unique space between two forms. The hybrid centaur has of course been discussed extensively in Chapter Two, however it is useful to return to this particular hybrid form in the context of cult worship. The centaur Cheiron holds an especial place in the following discussion, as he comes to represent the three primary features of the successful, or functional hybrid deity, embodying moral and civilised qualities, and existing as a singular entity. While Cheiron is at the forefront of this discussion, it should be noted that a number of other deities may be included in these various characteristics or roles, and will be treated as fitting.

### **Lucianic Hybrid Deities**

In Lucian's *On Sacrifices*, the satirist outlines the inherent idiocy of human devotion to and veneration of the gods. "The vain ones" (οἱ μάταιοι) are foolish for believing that the actions of the gods are, in this contemporary age, a reflection of human dedication (*Sacr.* 1). Lucian "ironisch abwertet"<sup>366</sup> the gods, suggesting that those who believe such tales should be laughed at (or wept for) in their ignorance (*Sacr.* 14-15). Lucian proposes that the gods of the Egyptian pantheon, being depicted with the heads of animals, in fact are those who align truly with the worth of the heavens (*Sacr.* 14), positions the Greek pantheon as deities who merely appear to be worthy of devotion. It is this distinction between successful hybrid deities and the corrupted hybrid deities that is the focus of the following discussion.

Spickermann divides the dialogues of Lucian that deal with hybrid, often foreign, gods into two primary categories: those that present foreign gods as infiltrating the Olympian space, and those that describe foreign gods in their own divine sphere.<sup>367</sup> In what follows, such a division is similarly utilised, concentrating predominantly on this notion of corruption of the divine sphere. The presence of hybrid deities is presented as having its root cause in the social make-up of the humans below. The hybrids below are shown to have a direct effect upon the composition of the divine sphere, and the replication of hybrid infiltration outside of the mortal realm serves to highlight the absurdity of its broader social acceptance.

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<sup>366</sup> W. Spickermann, *Lukian von Samosata und die fremden Götter*, '249.

<sup>367</sup> W. Spickermann, *Lukian von Samosata und die fremden Götter*, '243

In three particular Lucianic dialogues, we are transported to the realm of the gods wherein it is possible to view these deities conducting their council proceedings. Two of these, largely considered to be companion dialogues (*Jupiter Tragoedus* and *Parliament of the Gods*) discuss the waning dedication to the Olympian pantheon and the presence of hybrid deities in the divine sphere. A third, *Icaromenippus*,<sup>368</sup> expands upon the topics treated in the above two dialogues, yet it is unique in that it features a human infiltrating this divine space. The following discussion treats each of these dialogues in turn, and in doing so, it is shown that there exists a clear connection between the hybridity of the mortal and divine spheres, primarily through the notions of correct or justified dedication. Given the prevalence, as Anderson notes, of scholarship regarding the foreign deities in Lucian, a comprehensive assessment of Lucian's use of the foreign is not treated here.<sup>369</sup> Nevertheless, it is necessary to provide an overview of the above dialogues in order to assess their position in Lucian's broader critique of contemporary philosophy.

### *Jupiter Tragoedus*

*Jupiter Tragoedus* opens with the character of Zeus lamenting the diminishing of human devotion to him and the other deities. After some back and forth between himself and Hera regarding the nature of his lament (Hera is convinced it's merely another love-affair), Zeus explains that he overheard a conversation between two philosophers (Timocles and Damis) discussing the existence of the gods, stating that humanity's worship of the deities is precarious. In an attempt to rectify the situation, the gods agree to call together a meeting, wherein all of the gods from various pantheons are to be brought together in the manner of the Athenian assembly (*JTr.* 4-5). Hermes asks Zeus how he should announce the meeting, to which Zeus recommends using "metre, and high sounding poetic words" (τὸ κήρυγμα μέτροις τισὶ καὶ μεγαλοφωνίᾳ ποιητικῇ, *JTr.* 6). However Hermes disagrees, arguing that given he is not a poet, it is likely that any attempt to appear as such would make him a laughable sight. This suggestion of the pretence of high-sounding speech strongly echoes the Lucianic perception of the philosopher-sophists. Yet where Hermes recognises that it

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<sup>368</sup> Given the extensive treatment of this dialogue in the previous chapter, it is only the pertinent aspects of the narrative that are treated here.

<sup>369</sup> G. Anderson, *Lucian: Theme and Variation in the Second Sophistic*, 19.

would make him look ridiculous, the philosopher-sophists are content with acting as false sources of wisdom. This contrast between modes of speech becomes especially significant in light of Zeus' subsequent requests. It is here that the dialogue introduces notions of hybridity, through the appearance of hybrid foreign gods and their associated notions of worth.

With the assembly in motion, Zeus then plans the seating order, choosing to, as Hermes summarises, order them by wealth, not merit (*JTr.* 7-8). Zeus proclaims that each of the gods should be seated according to their material (ὕλη) and skill (τέχνη), with gold taking the first row of seats, to be followed by silver, then ivory, then bronze or stone and finally those of marble (*JTr.* 7). Hermes makes the apt observation that with this rule in mind, the front row of deities will be occupied solely by foreign gods,<sup>370</sup> naming Bendis, Anubis, Attis, Mithras and Men, deities made of gold and extensively honoured (πολυτίμητοι; *JTr.* 8).<sup>371</sup> Unsurprisingly, the Olympian gods express distaste at foreign gods being considered more valuable than themselves. Deflecting the complaints from Poseidon, Aphrodite and Helios (in his form as the Colossos of

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<sup>370</sup> Strabo, in the first century AD, exemplifies the assimilation of 'foreign' gods into the Greek pantheon, stating: "Just as in all other respects the Athenians continue to be hospitable to things foreign, so also in their worship of the gods; for they welcomed so many of the foreign rites that they were ridiculed for it by comic writers; and among these were the Thracian and Phrygian rites" (*Geography.* 10.3.18). J. Pollack, O. Primavesi and F. Pressler, 'Empedocles' in *Brill's New Pauly*, Antiquity volumes edited by H. Cancik and H. Schneider (2006) ([http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347\\_bnp\\_e329950](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e329950)).

<sup>371</sup> The hybridity of Anubis, given his common representation as having the head of a dog is clear, however it is worth expanding on the hybrid significance of the remaining deities included in this list. Bendis is largely characterised in ancient sources as being the Phrygian equivalent of Artemis, Hecate or Persephone, and is often characterised as an 'orgiastic' goddess, representing aspects of the Dionysian cults, being features alongside satyrs and maenads (C. Auffarth, 'Bendis', in *Brill's New Pauly*, Antiquity volumes edited by: H. Cancik and H. Schneider (2006) ([http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347\\_bnp\\_e215260](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e215260)). Attis, in many depictions, is linked with the Cult of Cybele, a cult that is associated most often with the Galli (A. S. Takacs, A. Sarolta, 'Cybele', in *Brill's New Pauly*, Antiquity volumes edited by: H. Cancik and H. Schneider (2006) ([http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347\\_bnp\\_e625470](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e625470)). Such a characterisation of Attis and Cybele are included too within Lucian's *De Dea Syria*, naming them potential foundation myths for the Syrian goddess (*DDS.* 15). Mithras, in a markedly different manner has associations with hybridity through the primary characterisation as sacrificing the bull. Gordon states, in relation to this aspect of the Mithric cult, that it "claimed to close the gap between god and man through a new myth about the origin of the sacrificial custom" R.L. Gordon, 'Mithras' in *Brill's New Pauly*, Antiquity volumes edited by: H. Cancik and H. Schneider (2006) ([http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347\\_bnp\\_e807080](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e807080)). Finally Men, traditionally considered to be the Phrygian moon god, is symbolic in the range of that which he oversees. Significantly, he is considered to be both the god of the heavens and of the underworld, while simultaneously being assimilated into the Greek pantheon (G. Petzl, 'Men' in *Brill's New Pauly*, Antiquity volumes edited by: H. Cancik and H. Schneider (2006) ([http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347\\_bnp\\_e731610](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e731610)).

Rhodes), Hermes attempts to maintain the proposed seating order, only to give up at Zeus' bequest (*JTr.* 12).<sup>372</sup>

The remainder of the dialogue presents the group of deities formulating a plan by which to ensure their dedication remains intact. The first to speak on the matter is Momus,<sup>373</sup> who not only states that he saw such diminished devotion to the gods coming, but also that it was inevitable, given the proliferation of honours being handed out to depraved and hateful men (*JTr.* 19). It is here that there is a clear indication that the events of the mortal sphere have a direct effect upon the composition of the divine sphere. Despite Momus' assertion that there are even mortal men among them (in the forms of Dionysus, Herakles, Ganymede and Asclepius),<sup>374</sup> Zeus asserts that he speaks foolishly, and is to be ignored (*JTr.* 23).<sup>375</sup> The presence of hybrid deities in the divine sphere serves as a starting point for the following assessment of Lucian's work. By showing a general distaste towards hybrid deities, it is possible to formulate more fully the effect that the philosopher sophists have had upon the composition of the divine sphere. The presence of hybrid deities themselves is ultimately the least of anyone's

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<sup>372</sup> In the sequel dialogue, this notion of value in the context of the foreign deities is revitalised, with *Parliament of the Gods* (discussed below) focussing more fully on the cause of hybrid deities and their presence in the Greek pantheon.

<sup>373</sup> Momus is perhaps best known from his role in a fable of Aesop (Perry 100), wherein he is depicted as critiquing the handicrafts of select gods, being Zeus, Poseidon and Athena. Notably, this fable is alluded to in Lucian's *Hermotimus*, yet replacing Zeus with Hephaestus (*Herm.* 20).

<sup>374</sup> Talbert discusses the distinctions in antiquity between what he terms 'immortals' and 'eternals,' distinguishing between these mortal men in the divine sphere and the 'proper' gods such as Zeus. In the context of his discussion, such a distinction is utilised as a means of understanding the conception of the *theios aner*, the divine man, that presents itself prominently in figures such as Jesus (C.H. Talbert, 'The Concept of Immortals in Mediterranean Antiquity' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94:3 (1975) : 419-436), but also through Apollonius of Tyana, and in some instances, Peregrinus. For discussions of Apollonius of Tyana as a *theios aner*, see E. Koskeniemi, 'Apollonius of Tyana: a typical theios aner?' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117: 3 (1998): 455-467; M. van Uytanghe, 'La Vie 'Apollonius de Tyana' er le discours hagiographique' in *Theios Sophistes: Essays on Flavius Philostratus' Vita Apollonii*, edited by K. Demoen and D. Praet, (Leiden: Brill, 2009) 335-374; J. J. Flinterman, *Power, Paideia and Pythagoreanism: Greek Identity, conceptions of the relationship between philosophers and monarchs and political ideals in Philostratus' Life of Apollonius* (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1995) esp. 5ff.; T. Schirren, *Philosophos Bios: Die antike Philosophenbiographie als symbolische Form. Studien zur Vita Apollonii des Philostrat* (Heidelberg: Bibliothek der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften, 2005), and for an outline of the role of Peregrinus as a *theios aner*, see B. Blackburn, *Theios Aner and the Markan Miracle Traditions: A Critique of the Theios Aner Concept as an Interpretive Background of the Miracle Traditions Used by Mark* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991) 90ff, with a discussion of the significance of Peregrinus in the context of Lucian's dialogue being discussed below.

<sup>375</sup> Prior to addressing the matter of their dedication, Zeus and Poseidon discuss the nature of fate, with Zeus expressing incredulity that Poseidon believes that they as gods have any control of the nature of the fates of men. If they did, he asks, would he "have let the temple-robbers get away from Olympia?" (*JTr.* 25), exemplifying the apparent helplessness of the deity. Not only are the gods shown to be receiving diminished dedication, but there is the sense that they are ultimately helpless to rectify the situation.

problems; their hybrid form is unusual and foreign, but not unlike the Lucianic centaur, the corruption comes from within, and is merely symbolised by a hybridity of form. As will be shown in the context of the remainder of the dialogue and its companion *Parliament of the Gods*, the hybrid forms present in the divine sphere stand as a metaphorical critique of hybridity of the divine sphere. The corruption of the Olympian pantheon presents itself more fully as a twisted desire for reputation and fame, ultimately in light of a diminished dedication. With the human world turning to the philosopher-sophists instead of the gods, these philosopher-sophists are shown to even have the capacity to corrupt the morals of the divine sphere not only those of the world below.

The second divinity to speak at length is Apollo who details the character of Timocles the Stoic, who is introduced in the opening sections of the dialogue as defending the honour of the gods (*JTr.* 17). Apollo recognises the philosopher's intellect, however states that his sound is foolish and μῆζοβάρβαρος (*JTr.* 27), and on account of this, proposes the delegation of a spokesman in order to ensure the Stoic victory – and retain human dedication to the divine sphere. Momus, the constant critic, dismisses the idea, encouraging Apollo instead to use his prophetic skill to determine the winner of the philosophical battle. However his prophecy merely serves to show that the human perception of the gods' uselessness is entirely valid. Momus asserts that the only thing Apollo's prophecy has revealed is that the mortal sphere is indeed foolish for having faith in the god at all, stating that the nature of his prophecies is as convoluted as the arguments of the sophists below (*JTr.* 31).<sup>376</sup> This comparison between sophistic argument and prophecy is not uncommon tool in antiquity, the primary example of this being Philostratus' own assimilation of the prophetic art with the sophistic method (*VS.* 1). In the context of Lucian however, I suggest this comparison is pushed to its furthest limits, the likeness of the two arts being used in a derogatory sense rather than as a means of praise. The rhetoric of the philosopher-sophists is indeed similar to prophecy, but where Philostratus, in his *Lives of the Sophists*, uses this comparison to show the value of sophistry, Lucian maintains that such a comparison is only valid in their capacity to propose impenetrable, convoluted, and ultimately false truths.

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<sup>376</sup> In encouraging Apollo to give his prophecy, Momus requests that his prophecy be clear, and “not itself in need for a spokesman or interpreter” (*JTr.* 30), an allusion to the necessity for the Stoic sophist needing a spokesman.



The last third of the dialogue sees the gods directing their attention to the mortal sphere, so as to listen in on the battle of wits between Timocles and Damis, who carry on their argument regarding the (non)existence of the gods. In the following discussion, the two arguments of the sophists are outlined, for the insight they provide in perceptions of the gods in the mortal sphere. The belief in the divine sphere is portrayed by Lucian as foolish, a sentiment that is evidenced too in his *On Sacrifices* dialogue, as discussed above. This, it becomes clear, directly relates to the infiltration of hybrid deities into the divine sphere. The hybridisation of the mortal sphere, in the context of the philosopher-sophists, has an effect upon the gods through a shift in their composition, ultimately formulating a pantheon that is no longer themselves dedicated to true divine providence, but rather, as with the philosopher-sophists, the gods are more concerned with their reputation. The suggestion that belief in these false gods is unwise can be seen as a direct critique of those who believe in the teachings of the philosopher-sophists. Their prophecies are proven to be false and convoluted, and they are similarly useless in their profession of wisdom.

The two sophists, Damis and Timocles, are presented as discussing the nature and existence of the gods, with each individual taking opposing sides regarding the (non)existence of the gods. Damis' first argument relates to this assertion, contending that the gods did indeed exist, they have expressed no anger towards him, and what's more, Timocles being angry on their behalf would earn him punishment for *his* disrespect of the divine will (*JTr.* 36-7). Timocles responds by proposing an argument for intelligent design, for which Damis immediately rebukes him, stating that such occurrences could just as well be a random event (*JTr.* 38). Seeing the ineffectual nature of his own stance, Timocles turns to Homer as a source of proof, since his works clearly show that the gods not only exist, but exhibit concern for the mortal realm. Once again, Timocles' argument is deftly overturned by Damis, noting that while Homer is a good poet, he is still ultimately a poet, composing tales as a source of enjoyment, not truth (*JTr.* 39).

Grasping at straws, Timocles retorts and suggests that if the gods did not exist, then all men and all nations must therefore have been deceived. In reply, Damis notes the wide variety of religions and beliefs, which serve to cause confusion about the nature of the gods. He lists those who worship hybrid deities, objects, natural phenomena – inciting an interjection from the god, Momus, essentially stating, “I told

you so” (*JTr.* 42). Additionally, Damis rejects the validity of oracles precisely on account of their hybridity; Apollo’s prophecies are ἀμφήκης and διπρόσωπος, having double meanings, like the one which was presented to Croesus (*JTr.* 43).

These particular critiques are especially significant, on account of the clear dismissal of the value of hybrid deities. Momus had asserted previously that the diminished dedication to the divine sphere was inevitable, arguing that it was on account of the depravity that manifested in the human world. Here, such an assertion is expanded upon and evidenced directly as the depravity of the mortal realm relates in this instance to the widespread belief in hybrid deities. The divine sphere has become corrupted by the hybridity of the human sphere. Belief in the philosopher-sophists, in particular as a source of moral virtue, has overturned the role and responsibility of the divine sphere.

### *Cult and Morality*

Prior to turning to the *Parliament of the Gods* and *Icaromenippus* dialogues, it is important to assess the inherent role of the gods, and the means by which the philosopher-sophists are able, in essence, to replace the divine sphere as a source of moral virtue. Hybrid deities, in the broader context of cult worship, are frequent throughout the Greek and Roman pantheon, however due to space constraints, these deities cannot be treated in full here. However two deities in question, Demeter and Cheiron,<sup>377</sup> are a useful tool for understanding the way in which hybrid deities manifest themselves in the context of cult worship, and how they are able to instil a form of moral virtue upon those who offer dedication.

In the case of Cheiron and Demeter, it is their relationship to the horse that hybridises them; Cheiron of course, is a centaur, and Demeter, in the guise as the chthonic deity Melaina, is often represented in art with the head of a horse.<sup>378</sup> Despite having such overtly hybridised forms, these two deities are nevertheless consistently considered to have a positive influence. The role of the horse in Greek mythology,

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<sup>377</sup> For the purposes of the following discussion, I include Cheiron as a deity on account of his role in cult worship. For further analysis of Cheiron’s role as a deity, see E. Aston, *Mixanthropoi*, 91ff and E. Aston, ‘Thetis and Cheiron in Thessaly,’ *Kernos* 22 (2009): 83-107.

<sup>378</sup> E. Aston, *Mixanthropoi*, 99.

perhaps contributing to the violent nature of the centaur itself, is an animal often deemed wild and destructive, a characteristic shown most prominently through the myth of Diomedes' man-eating horses (Hyg. *Fab.* 250; Diod. 4.15.3). The centaur Cheiron, however, is not shown to embody these attributes of his part-horse form,<sup>379</sup> but rather, is worshipped for the inherently human qualities. Cheiron, the famous teacher of Achilles and healer, stands as an exemplar not only of Greek wisdom, but of hybrid wisdom.<sup>380</sup> Cheiron as hybrid deity makes an acceptable source of worship precisely on account of the distance from reality that the centaur Cheiron represents, both geographically<sup>381</sup> and physically. As the popular nursery rhyme has shown, horses are largely ineffective in performing medical procedures, making the role of Cheiron as a doctor figure simultaneously implausible yet also wholly plausible, given that the role of educator and healer is attributed to his human form. The reader suspends disbelief in the imaginary in order to allow a justified and reasonable worship in the hybrid creature.

Demeter Melaina, in this context, is similarly a hybrid deity with a hybrid role, being both geographically and temporally distant from the Greek pantheon, yet simultaneously entrenched in contemporary cult worship. The chthonic incarnation of Demeter acts in opposition to her Olympian alter-ego; she is hybrid in form, being frequently depicted with the head of a horse,<sup>382</sup> and her role exists to show that the cultivation of grain and civilisation can be taken away as easily as it was granted (Paus. 8.42).<sup>383</sup> Aston outlines that Demeter Melaina, when not receiving the correct dedication to her cult, may "undo the process of civilisation completely" by denying humanity access to grain, necessitating a (re)turn to cannibalism, and uncivilised behaviour. She states that the association with her equine form is clear, due to the hybrid nature of the horse as both wild and civilised, not unlike the figure of Cheiron. She states:

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<sup>379</sup> As will be shown below, Cheiron's role as a civilised and 'human' centaur comes to be a result of his role as a named, singular entity – the race of centaurs broadly, as shown in Chapter Two, are far more prone to acting in a manner representative of their destructive horse form.

<sup>380</sup> See too E. Aston, 'The Absence of Chiron' *Classical Quarterly* 56: 2 (2006): 349-362, particularly 350ff. for a discussion Cheiron as embodying many of characteristics of the so-called 'underground hero.' For more on the concept of the 'underground hero' see Y. Ustinova, "'Either a daimon, a hero or perhaps a god:' mythical residents of sub-terranean chambers', *Kernos* 15 (2002): 267-288.

<sup>381</sup> E. Aston, *Mixanthropoi* 92 ff.

<sup>382</sup> L. Beschi, 'Demeter' in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* IV: 4 (LIMC) edited by L. Kahil, München: Artemis Verlag, 1988, 328-332.

<sup>383</sup> E. Aston, *Mixanthropoi* 101.

“The horse is a domesticated, vegetarian quadruped that works on man’s behalf; but this side of its nature can vanish in a flash, to be replaced with the qualities of a *thêr*, a wild beast.”<sup>384</sup> Such a description of the horse highlights the dual nature of the animal, being simultaneously a constructive and destructive force. This potential destruction is evoked through the hybrid figure of Demeter Melaina. Cult dedication to the figure of Demeter Melaina, the horse-headed god, acts as a preventative measure to ensure the continuation of civilised existence. Aston notes that Demeter’s role as a hybrid deity differs significantly from that of Cheiron, stating that her characterisation as a vengeful goddess is “completely at odds with Cheiron....works to preserve human civilisation,”<sup>385</sup> whereas Demeter Melaina serves simply as a threat to its destruction. Although she is primarily a deity of Phigalian religion, her representation in Greek art and literature reveals the integration of her hybrid form into the Greek pantheon, and ultimately serves to warn against the act of transgressing against the divine.

Cheiron and Demeter Melaina serve as starting points for the following discussion. They represent the quintessential hybrid, being a combination of the horse and human, and their role as hybrid deities largely serves simultaneously both to preserve and to threaten human civilisation. Yet the corruption that traditionally imbues notions of the hybrid is not attributed to the hybrid itself. In the case of Demeter, her potential as destructive is only incited by a form of corruption of the human realm, through their lack of cult worship. As will be shown in the following discussion, it is the subsidiaries of the hybrid deity that become the source of the corruption, becoming unable to maintain their role as a moral centre for humankind. As will be shown in the case of Cheiron, the hybrid deity itself maintains its uncorrupted role among the Greek pantheon, while the centaurs en masse, and their cult dedication embodies the wildness of the hybrid creature. Lucian’s work too, distinguishes between the singular and the plural in terms of dedication; the hybrid alone stands as a figure worthy of worship, while the philosopher-sophists as a group act as a mass of hybrids, becoming a corrupting force.

### *Parliament of the Gods*

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<sup>384</sup> E. Aston, *Mixanthropoi*, 106.

<sup>385</sup> E. Aston, *Mixanthropoi*. 109.

In the discussion that follows, the corruption and inappropriate hybridisation in the divine sphere directly correlates with the diminished dedication of human beings. Moreover, it is shown that the invasive hybrid deities and their associates offer an analogy with the philosopher-sophists. Momus' opinions on the nature of the gods and their diminished dedication in relation to hybrid deities increases in *Parliament of the Gods*; in *Jupiter Tragoedus*, Zeus had decided to deal with the matter of foreign deities and their relative value at another time (*JTr.* 12). It is here that such a topic is treated, and once again Momus takes centre stage with his personal critique. The primary consideration in the following discussion is the fact that Momus' critique of hybrid deities is no longer focused upon the foreign gods. Rather, Momus extends his criticism to the hybridisation of the Olympian pantheon, provoking a further reflection upon the relationship between the divine and mortal spheres. The Golden Age of Greek philosophical pursuits have passed, and contemporary philosophical culture is dominated by corrupted, hybridised philosopher-sophists, who are more concerned with their reputation than with learning. Such an effect has likewise been transferred to the divine sphere, wherein the gods (as shown above) are concerned only with their dedication and not with expressing divine providence. Momus' first complaint is directed at Dionysus, who is portrayed as not only being of foreign descent, but is also half-man (ἡμιάνθρωπος, *Deor. Conc.* 4).<sup>386</sup> A large part of Momus' critique of Dionysus rests upon the associated introduction of his clan to the divine sphere, these being "Pan and Silenus and the Satyrs,"<sup>387</sup> who become similarly connected to

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<sup>386</sup> It is worth briefly noting the way in which Dionysus is traditionally viewed (albeit falsely) as an arriving god. Such a theme presents itself in Euripides' *Bacchae*, depicting him as arriving in Thebes, and there is a similar sense of arriving when considered in the context of his role as Dionysus Eleuthereus, becoming integrated into the Athenian conception of deities (A. Henrichs, 'Between City and Country: Cultic Dimensions of Dionysus in Athens and Attica, in *Cabinet of the Muses: Essays on Classical and Comparative Literature in Honor of Thomas G. Rosenmeyer*, edited by M. Griffith and D. J. Mastronarde (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990) 259). For more detailed analyses of Dionysus' role in cult as an arriving god, and for evidence contradicting such a representation, see S. G. Cole, 'Finding Dionysus' in *A Companion to Greek Religion*, edited by D. Ogden, (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007) 327-342 and M. Detienne, *Dionysus at Large*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

<sup>387</sup> The Classical period sees the move of Pan from an anthropomorphised, upright goat to fully hybridised form of goat and man. (R. Herbig, *Pan, der griechische Bocksgott: Versuch einer Monographie* (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1949) 53-7.) The goat element of Pan is predominantly related to the pastoral life, acting as the god of shepherds and animal-herding, acting as an important, and perhaps integral element of the success and maintenance of human civilisation. Pan occupies a curious space in the world of hybrid deities, as despite the favourable elements of his goat aspects contributing to human civilisation, there nevertheless "existed an underlying awareness of their [the goat parts] potential to disturb and disquiet." (E. Aston, *Mixanthropoi*, 118.) The role of Pan, Silenus and the Satyrs cannot be discussed in full here, however it is nevertheless significant as an exemplar of the how a deity, in a plural form, may have a starkly different effect in the human realm. Rather than

foreignness and hybridity. This, states Momus, is the reason for humanity's current lack of reverence towards the gods; the gods have become laughable and monstrous, (*Deor. Conc.* 5) no longer representative of true divinity.

In these opening sections, it is easy to see the parallel to be drawn between the hybrid deities and hybrid philosopher-sophists, in particular in relation to notions of singular<sup>388</sup> and plural deities that was outlined above. From an internal perspective, the gods are shown to be concerned with the lack of dedication afforded them from the human realm, this shift being attributed to the philosopher-sophists. It is argued that their hybridity has affected the composition of the divine sphere in two primary ways; their hybrid form has infiltrated the realm of divinity, allowing the 'corrupted' hybrid deities to occupy it, and significantly, humanity has not simply stopped worshipping the gods, but rather worships the philosopher-sophists. It is the former of these effects of hybridity that is important for the following discussion, as the corruption of the divine sphere with hybrid deities is shown to be a consequence not of the hybrid deities outlined above, but rather of the followers of these deities.

In the context of this distinction between the singular and plural deity, it is worth returning to the discussion of centaurs found in Chapter Two. In this chapter, it was shown that the hybrid centaur may take many forms, being depicted in both its traditional role as a violent and savage beast, and a humanised figure in the context of a family unit. As noted in Chapter Two and reiterated above, Cheiron stands as an outlier to such characterisations, being wholly distanced from the more general race of centaurs. The question of why there exists two different 'kinds' of hybrid identity comes down precisely to the distinction between singular and plural entities, the hybrid corruption being attributed to the influence of the many over the individual. As Aston notes, "the plurality of mixanthropes overrides individual identity and establishes instead a quality of the generic that is vital to the mixanthropic nature."<sup>389</sup> For fear of beating a dead horse, it will suffice to say that this overriding of the generic over the

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existing as a singular entity that serves to stand for the civilisation and progression of humanity and its virtue, they are a nameless mass, and a source of chaos, not unlike Lucian's contemporary philosopher-sophists.

<sup>388</sup> It is important to note that my use of the term 'singular' in this discussion should not be pushed too far. As Versnel discusses, there is rarely a singular identity of a deity, but more often than not, a single named deity will have multiple functions, which frequently translates into having multiple forms and rituals (H. S. Versnel, *Coping with the Gods*, 35ff). For my purposes, the 'singular' deity is understood simply in direct opposition to the unnamed and undistinguished masses.

<sup>389</sup> E. Aston, *Mixanthropoi*, 299.

individual can be evidenced in the mythology of the centaurs themselves, with the mass of centaurs being the primary representatives of the corrupted hybrid form.

## *Zeus*

From a divine perspective, the philosopher-sophists appear as a mass of corrupted hybrids, worthy of little more than mockery. This perspective too, exhibits itself within the divine sphere, for as the dialogue continues, more and more deities are considered by Momus to be corrupted hybrids, being false representatives of divine wisdom. The most significant among these is Zeus himself, for it was his transformations in the mortal realm that allowed the corruption of the heavens. Not only is Zeus himself a corrupted hybrid, but the composition of the divine sphere even permits Herakles and Dionysus to be appointed gods. Momus, moreover, asserts that Zeus has allowed an *eagle* into the heavens, along with a number of mortals (Attis, Ganymede), yet this is not the most absurd corruption of the heavens. Momus brings his diatribe back to the Egyptian hybrid gods, expressing pure disbelief that dogs, bulls, ibises, monkeys and billy-goats have been inserted (παράβύω) into the heavens (*Deor. Conc.* 10). Even Zeus himself, he notes, has been corrupted by the Egyptian pantheon, through his representation as Zeus-Ammon. Here, Zeus is portrayed as not only adopting hybrid forms in the mortal sphere through his transformations, but also in the divine sphere.<sup>390</sup>

The mere existence of the gods, as *Jupiter Tragoedus* have shown, is precarious, as the hybridity of belief systems in the mortal realm has created confusion, not clarity. The hybridised deities act as a metaphor for the hybrid philosopher-sophists below, consequently, it is not unreasonable to assert that the validity of philosophy similarly hangs in the balance. In the following sections, Momus reveals the reason for the presence of hybrid, false gods, blaming the worship of abstract divinities on the

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<sup>390</sup> The image of Zeus Ammon as having the horns of a ram in addition to his anthropomorphised form can be traced at least as far back as the sixth century BC, making his hybrid form an established aspect of his mythology. Parke describes a Cyreneiac coin from the sixth century BC that depicts a 'Zeus type' as a god with ram's horns. (H.W. Parke, *Oracles of Zeus*, 203). Not only is Zeus shown to be concerned with his chthonic form as Zeus Meilichios (*Icar.* 24), but he is similarly concerned with the temple robbers of Dodona. At the shrine of Dodona, as Parke notes, there exists a head of Zeus Ammon which retains the traditional ram's horns (H.W. Parke, *Oracles of Zeus*, 208). This connection between Dodona and Zeus Ammon may allow for Lucian's particular critique of Zeus Ammon in the *Council* to be viewed in his broader representations of the divine, however given the obscurity of the cult reference, this can merely be speculation.

philosophers. The philosophers, having placed so much credence on devoting oneself to Virtue, Nature, Destiny and Chance, are precisely to blame for the absence of sacrifice to the true gods (*Deor. Conc.* 13), preferring instead to devote themselves to abstractions. It is here that a direct connection with *Jupiter Tragoedus* appears, for the way in which Momus is able to reflect upon the philosophers' effect upon the divine sphere. The deities are to be made in man's image, and through this insistence upon the philosophical influence, the hybrid sphere of Lucian's *Jupiter Tragoedus* and *Council of the Gods* acts as a reflection of the hybridity of the mortal sphere. The hybrid philosopher-sophists have become a bane not only to humanity, but even the gods themselves.

### *Icaromenippus*

Having outlined these two companion dialogues, it is useful to return to *Icaromenippus*, for a third view into the sphere of the divine.<sup>391</sup> Here, the two primary concerns of *Jupiter Tragoedus* and *Parliament of the Gods* converge, not only portraying the gods as concerned with the state of the philosopher-sophists, but also presenting an active infiltration of the divine sphere. Menippus, a visitor from the mortal realm, becomes privy to viewing the world below from above, even being able to view the gods convening in an assembly. Yet unlike in the dialogues discussed above, Menippus' infiltration in the divine sphere sees the gods having the agency to actively punish the philosophers, a stark contrast to Zeus' assertion in *Jupiter Tragoedus*.

Upon arriving in the Heavens, Menippus relays both the concerns of the Moon, and his own concerns, emphasising the unsatisfactory nature of the philosophers due to their lack of knowledge about the heavens (*Icar.* 23). Zeus, impressed with Menippus' ability even to reach the heavens (exceeding the efforts of Otus and Ephialtes), invites him to stay the night, so that Zeus himself may learn about the human world. Concerned with the waning dedication towards him on account of the philosophical schools, Zeus asks of Menippus if any of the "descendants of Pheidias" (*Icar.* 24; τῶν ἀπὸ Φειδίου) are still remaining.<sup>392</sup> The characterisation of Zeus in *Icaromenippus* emphasises Zeus'

<sup>391</sup> For an overview of Lucian's *Icaromenippus*, see Chapter 4.

<sup>392</sup> Such a phrase is possibly referring to his biological descendants who were, according to Pausanias, assigned the task of keeping the statue of Zeus clean (Paus. 5.14.5). Pausanias states in his description of the Statue of Zeus that "The descendants of Pheidias, (οἱ ἀπόγονοι Φειδίου) called Cleansers, have



desire to maintain his reputation in the human world. If the descendants of Pheidias no longer remain, there is no one to ensure that the image of Zeus is to receive continued dedication. This concern with worship, as has been evidenced above, reflects precisely the self-centred concerns of the philosopher-sophists.

Zeus also laments the Athenian neglect of the Diasia festival, wherein dedicatees presented ‘bloodless offerings’ to Zeus Meilichios, as alluded to earlier.<sup>393</sup> Walter Burkert outlines Zeus Meilichios’ role as a chthonic deity, separate from Zeus’ Olympian characterisation. While many chthonic deities are traditionally associated with agriculture,<sup>394</sup> Meilichios is more closely associated with the souls of the underworld.<sup>395</sup> Zeus in his chthonic form is also largely represented either as a snake or in association with a snake, in contrast to the anthropomorphised form of Pheidias’ Zeus. The hybridity of Zeus’ form in this dialogue presents itself in the context of Zeus occupying a space between his Olympian and Chthonic forms, as this zoomorphised, chthonic characterisation of Zeus is immediately followed by a reference to the Olympieion. Zeus asks of Menippus whether the Olympieion’s construction has been completed, and given its role as a temple dedicated specifically to Zeus’ Olympian form, there is the suggestion that Lucian’s Zeus is equally concerned with his role in the Underworld and as an Olympian god. The combination of Zeus’ Olympian and Chthonic forms are useful in identifying the disparity, in his zoomorphised *and* anthropomorphised forms,<sup>396</sup> and the three functions of Zeus reveal the diverse, hybrid nature of the god. While Pausanias’ discussion of the Pheidian statue includes the story of Zeus’ approval of his representation by means of thunderbolt (Paus. 11.9), Lucian

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received from the Eleans the privilege of cleaning the image of Zeus from the dirt that settles on it, and they sacrifice to the Worker Goddess before they begin to polish it.”

<sup>393</sup> E. Simon, *Festivals of Attica: An Archaeological Commentary* (London: University of Wisconsin Press: 1983) 13. See also Thuc. 1.126.6.4-5, who states that instead of blood sacrifices, the populace brought “traditional offerings of the country”. It should be noted that Jameson argues that Thucydides’ ἱερεῖα does not exclude animal victims from the sacrifice. Rather, he interprets the term to mean that the sacrificial offerings merely excluded sheep, on the basis of the Erchian sacrificial calendar and its suggestion of normal sacrifice practice.

<sup>394</sup> W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985) 200-201.

<sup>395</sup> Jameson considers Zeus Meilichios to preside especially over the ‘ancestral dead’ on account of the deity’s association with family cults. (M. Jameson, ‘Notes on the Sacrificial Calendar from Erchia,’ *Erchia Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 89:1 (1965): 161).

<sup>396</sup> Scott Scullion, in assessing Olympian and chthonic rituals, concludes that such a distinction between the two is largely a misapprehension. The Diasia festival in particular combines aspects of both chthonic and Olympian ritual practice, (S. Scullion, ‘Olympian and Chthonian,’ *Classical Antiquity* 13:1 (1994): 79ff.) and states that “binary oppositions of the Olympian/chthonian kind generally need to be kept somewhat fluid” (S. Scullion, ‘Olympian and Chthonian,’ 118.)

offers a tripartite perspective, encompassing not only Zeus' anthropomorphised Olympian form, but also his form as animal and chthonic deity of the Underworld.

Zeus' equal concern with these two appearances reflects the hybridisation of the divine sphere, and his concern with the relative dedication towards his two forms relates directly to the concerns presented by Menippus. Despite Menippus' protestations that the human sphere considers Zeus to be the king of the gods, Zeus is shown to have a clearer perspective, arguing from experience that his "altars are more frigid than the Laws of Plato or the Syllogisms of Chrysippus" (*Icar*. 24). The insinuation here is clear; the lack of dedication offered to the divine sphere and its subsequent corruption is shown to have a direct relationship to the philosopher-sophists. Philosophical discourse in the present age has gone cold, no longer embodying the warmth that may be acquired through a true and informed pursuit of philosophical wisdom. This lack of warmth has similarly chilled the altars of the gods, to the extent that the value in the gods has ceased to exist. Rather than the humans below dedicating themselves to the gods, or to philosophy in the pursuit of wisdom and virtue, their source of morality comes from what Lucian views to be the bane of civilised society: the hybrid, corrupted, centaur-like philosopher-sophists.

### **Peregrinus**

The theme of the corrupted, uncivilised, philosopher-sophists and their relationship to the divine sphere culminates in the dialogue regarding the death of the Cynic turned Christian, Peregrinus (also known as Proteus).<sup>397</sup> Through this dialogue, Lucian actualises the concerns expressed by the gods in the above dialogues, showing the quintessential hybrid philosopher-sophist as a corrupting force upon those around him. It is Peregrinus' role as the epitome of Lucian's satire that motivates him being the final figure in this discussion, existing as a hybrid figure that deserves little praise, and extensive mockery. Lucian's dialogue on the death of Peregrinus can be divided into two main parts; the first deals with the biography of Peregrinus, while the final half details the manner and aftermath of his death. The characterisation of Peregrinus throughout is as a fraudulent philosopher who seeks only to gain reputation and glory.

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<sup>397</sup> Due to space constraints, the following discussion is limited to the Lucianic characterisation of Peregrinus. It should be noted, however, that it is possible to see a similar examination of philosophers and hybrids through the characterisation of Alexander Abonoteichus, the false prophet and imposter.

Peregrinus thereby becomes the fullest example of the hybrid corruption that has been the focus of this chapter, and of this dissertation more broadly.

Lucian's work on Peregrinus stands as the single source for the life and death of Peregrinus,<sup>398</sup> and thus it is crucial to note that the following discussion makes no attempt at determining the truth behind Lucian's account. Lucian maintains from the beginning that Peregrinus' primary motivation was his love for reputation, and speaks of the dedication of his many followers. Primary among these is a Cynic named Theagenes, who vehemently defends the honour of Peregrinus against Lucian's own vocal dismissals. Theagenes boldly claims that Peregrinus' actions have simply been misinterpreted; not only do his actions "rival Olympian Zeus," but his intention to self-immolate (which Lucian later deems to be simply a means to regain his renown; *Peregr.* 20) is not dissimilar to Heracles, Asclepius, Dionysus and Empedocles before him (*Peregr.* 4). In these early sections, Peregrinus is characterised by Lucian as a holy man, and acting in a manner similar to that of the other Olympian deities (with the exception of Empedocles). However Lucian does note that despite Theagenes' extravagant claims in defending Peregrinus, he does not deign (ἡξίου) to compare Proteus with Diogenes,<sup>399</sup> nor Antisthenes, nor even Socrates (*Peregr.* 5). Lucian (perhaps rightly) distinguishes between the relative value of these Olympian deities and the philosophers of the past, thus the comparison of Peregrinus to the deities is, on the face of it, ridiculous. However, the comparison is in another sense perfectly apt. The self-obsessed, attention-seeking holy man is all too similar to the gods as they appear in Lucian. As the work continues, particularly in relation to Peregrinus' association with Christianity and subsequently Cynicism, the connection between the gods and Peregrinus comes down precisely to their mutual characterisation as corrupted hybrids.<sup>400</sup>

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<sup>398</sup> M.J. Edwards. 'Satire and Verisimilitude: Christianity in Lucian's "Peregrinus"' *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 38:1 (1989): 89. See too G. Anderson, *Sage, Saint and Sophist: Holy Men and their Associates in the Early Roman Empire*, (London: Routledge, 1994) 31ff; 41-45.

<sup>399</sup> This comparison with Diogenes and the other well-known Cynics will be returned to below.

<sup>400</sup> It is worth noting here that Fields also discusses this particular passage, noting that the comparison with Peregrinus and Zeus goes further still. She notes that the Theagenes continues his speech, stating that "These are the two noblest masterpieces that the world has seen – the Olympian Zeus, and Proteus; of the one, the creator and artists is Phidias, of the other, Nature" (*Peregr.* 6). Fields argues that this inclusion shows that Theagenes partly rescinds his direct comparison with the deity, however more importantly, the notion that Proteus was derived from nature serves to imply that he is not simply comparable, but superior (D. Fields, 'The Reflections of Satire: Lucian and Peregrinus' *Transactions of the American Philosophical Association* 143: 1 (2013): 231).

The following discussion assesses Peregrinus' Christian and Cynic lives in turn, as it is crucial to understand the background of the Lucianic depiction in order to understand the way in which his self-immolation acts as a parallel to the hybrid corruption of the divine sphere. As noted above, the discussion here is limited to Lucian's account,<sup>401</sup> which states that following his exile, Peregrinus turns to the Christian doctrine. In no short order, Lucian (through the voice of a Democritean) outlines that Peregrinus became a prophet and a θιασάρχης (Dionysian cult-leader), to the extent that he was regarded as a god (*Peregr.* 11). The extent of his worship by the masses culminates in his imprisonment, when he is charged with the crime of introducing the mystery rites (τελετή) of Christianity into the world. His arrest, however, did little to diminish the level of dedication afforded the divine man, who came to be called the "new Socrates" (*Peregr.* 12).<sup>402</sup> Peregrinus, in this characterisation, becomes a martyr figure for his followers, a source of such divine wisdom that he is able to amass worship, and significantly, revenue (*Peregr.* 13). In adopting the tenets of Christianity, that encourage the transgression of the Greek pantheon in favour of the promises of community, Peregrinus stands as a figure to whom worship and holiness may come easily. Lucian states, "if any charlatan or trickster...comes among them [the people], he quickly acquires sudden wealth" (*Peregr.* 13), not as a result of true wisdom, but of sheer deception.<sup>403</sup>

In the sections that follow, the characterisation of Peregrinus becomes more convoluted, as the transition towards Cynicism stands as a striking development in the development of the divine man. While being imprisoned, Peregrinus' desire for reputation becomes more insistent; dying in prison, he rationalises, would garner him even greater worship – an assertion that encourages his release from prison, as the

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<sup>401</sup> For informed discussions of Peregrinus and the relationship to Christianity, particularly the motivations for his conversion, see G. Bagnani, 'Peregrinus Proteus and the Christians,' *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 4:1 (1955): 107-112; J. N. Bremmer, 'Peregrinus' Christian Career' in *Flores Florentina: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez*, edited by A. Hillhorst, É. Puech and E. Tigchelaar, 729-747, (Brill: Leiden, 2007) and M.J. Edwards. 'Satire and Verisimilitude: Christianity in Lucian's "Peregrinus"' *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 38:1 (1989): 89-98.

<sup>402</sup> The motivations behind such a comparison are evident. Plato's *Apology of Socrates* outlines that Socrates was charged for being an imposter (22) and a figure who is responsible for corrupting the young (24c). Socrates' defence against such charges, in the context of Lucian's *Peregrinus*, is used to frame Peregrinus as similarly unjust in his imprisonment: according to his followers.

<sup>403</sup> I. L. E. Ramelli, 'Lucian's Peregrinus as Holy Man and Charlatan and the Construction of the Contrast between Holy Men and Charlatans in the Acts of Mari' in *Holy Men and Charlatans in the Ancient Novel*, edited by S. Panayotakis, G. Schmeling and M. Paschalis, (Barkhuis: Amsterdam, 2015), 105-120.

punishment of imprisonment is no longer effective (*Peregr.* 14). Returning to his homeland, he learns that his possessions have been stripped from him, which apparently motivates his conversion to the Cynic way of life.<sup>404</sup> Peregrinus, by this period in his life, is described as wearing “his hair long by now, dressed in a dirty mantle, he had a wallet slung by his side, the staff was in his hand.” These are the traditional and most recognisable features of the Cynic external appearance. What is more, in contrast to his depiction later in life, moments preceding his death (*Peregr.* 5), Peregrinus is (falsely) hailed by his followers as the only one worthy of praise equivalent to Diogenes and Crates (*Peregr.* 15). His Cynic transition culminates in his venture to Egypt, wherein he receives teaching from Agathobulus: a figure who studied alongside the esteemed Cynic Demonax (*Demon.* 3). Yet despite gaining the teachings of Cynicism through such praiseworthy channels, Peregrinus is characterised as still seeking reputation over true wisdom, merely using “philosophy as a cloak” (*Peregr.* 18). Despite being heralded as a god, and seeking to maintain his reputation as a holy man, his return to Greece sets up the beginning of his downfall, to the extent that he turns to Zeus, whom he had previously dismissed, to gain sanctuary (*Peregr.* 20), ultimately realising that his career as a holy man worthy of worship and praise, had come to an end.

Peregrinus rationalises that he was unable to gain further reputation through his actions as a living prophet, and thus is inspired die by self-immolation. He considers that being the centre of a spectacle so awe-inspiring (*Peregr.* 22) would surely provide him with the reputation and glory that he so desired. Although Peregrinus claims to be sacrificing himself for the “sake of his fellow men” (*Peregr.* 23), as an exercise in teaching them to not fear death and ensure hardships, Lucian deftly rejects such an assertion. Rather, he warns against imitating such a corrupted and vainglorious individual, simultaneously exposing those who worship the figure of Peregrinus. “Emulation” (ζῆλός) he states, “is not a matter of wallet, staff and mantle,” (*Peregr.* 24) but an absolute and complete dedication to that which you choose to imitate. The followers of Peregrinus, much like Peregrinus himself, strive towards the appearance

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<sup>404</sup> Earlier in the piece, (*Peregr.* 10) we are told by Lucian that Peregrinus was responsible for the death of his father; upon returning to his home city of Parium, the populace continue to mourn the death, and move to punish Peregrinus for his actions. Lucian goes on to relate the cunning ploy that Peregrinus enacts in order to rid himself of such a charge. For the purposes of the following discussion, however, I focus upon the transition of Peregrinus to Cynicism and the effect this has upon his characterisation, rather than the supposed motives.

of wisdom and do not hold true to the uncorrupted and valuable tenets that a true follower of religion or philosophy should hold.

The figure of Peregrinus, as evidenced in Lucian's depiction, is shown in this first half of the work to be a figure driven by greed and a desire for reputation, unable to commit fully to a virtuous existence. He is neither Christian nor Cynic, but a motley mix of the two, and he is neither man nor god. His relationship to the divine sphere becomes a sheer transgression of his correct boundaries; rather than becoming a hybrid of superior qualities to the two halves, he instead is source of corruption for the two spheres. As has been shown, his actions and striving for prosperity and glory amass numbers of followers under false pretences, and cloaking himself as a god or a philosophical teacher merely undermines the value previously attributed these lofty positions. Lucian supposes, reflecting upon Peregrinus' intent to self-immolate, that the gods themselves are to relish the death of Peregrinus, stating that "no one of the gods would be angry if Peregrinus were to die an evil (κακῶς) death" (*Peregr.* 26).

In the context of hybrid gods, it is possible to view the figure of Peregrinus as the epitome of the corruption that exudes from the hybrid philosopher-sophists, as the hybridity of the world below is shown to directly affect society's perception of the divine sphere. As has been shown through the three dialogues that are positioned in the divine sphere, this lack of dedication afforded them is hailed as one of their primary concerns. Humans no longer show dedication towards the gods, but rather towards men who portray themselves as divine in an attempt to gain reputation and wealth. This, as the *Peregrinus* shows, is precisely the extent of corruption that the hybrid philosopher-sophists subsist upon.

In this chapter, it had been argued that the Lucianic dialogues that situate themselves in the divine sphere should also be considered to constitute a critique of the philosopher-sophists, through the way in which the texts are framed around notions of hybridity. Hybrid deities, are not rare, nor do they belong entirely to the realm of Eastern deities. Rather, they appear frequently and pervasively in the Greek pantheon, and this chapter serves to highlight Lucian's manipulation of this aspect of cult dedication. It has been shown that the hybrid deity can be a source of value to humanity; the figure of Cheiron stands as a heroic and learned centaur, while Demeter Melaina ensures the survival and progression of the human race. However even these civilised hybrids have their

corrupted counterparts, and the indiscernible, nameless masses that come to exist as the progeny of these hybrid cult figures stand as representatives of destruction, as evidenced through the race of centaurs more broadly.

In the context of the Lucianic dialogues, this becomes even more significant, as he provides an insight into the societal makeup of the divine sphere. The personification Momus, in *Parliament of the Gods* and *Zeus Tragoedus*, stands as an outspoken individual who serves to highlight the present state of the divine sphere and its inept nature. The Olympian deities, once worthy of cult worship, are now dismissed as being of little value, and in the final third of *Icaromenippus* this diminished reputation is shown to be the direct consequence of the philosopher-sophists. In the context of *Peregrinus*, we are offered a form of case-study that serves to support the divine claims that the philosopher-sophists are a harmful source; Peregrinus, rather than encouraging civility and moral values, instead ensures that his own reputation becomes preserved,<sup>405</sup> and in this instance, directly diminishes the value of the gods. The hybrid philosopher-sophists are not unlike the mass of centaurs: destructive, thoughtless and ultimately, interested in little more than ensuring their own worth.

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<sup>405</sup> I, and presumably Lucian himself, do understand the irony in continuing to speak about Peregrinus.

## Conclusion

*I know that all of this is depressing, because it seems as if America's reputation overseas is under attack from its own President.*

*Trump is the worst of us, yes, but he's not all of us. If I had to distil America down to one sound, it wouldn't be the braying voice of Donald Trump screaming 'America First.'*

*Donald Trump does not reflect America...America is not one thing, it's a beautiful mess of contradictions, where good and bad are mixed together.*

### Trump vs. The World: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver

John Oliver's role in the current political climate cannot be overestimated. As Wren states, late night commentators, often comedians, offer a means for "viewers, by proxy, to get in the last word,"<sup>406</sup> allowing a reflection and ultimately rejection of what absurdity the day's news has brought. "A dangerously unserious president," she states, "has put our professional joke-tellers in a serious mood,"<sup>407</sup> shifting the dichotomy between audience and commentator, and encouraging the audience not to follow along blindly. The era of Donald Trump, and the multitude of political commentators upon his presidency through a wide range of media outlets, is a useful means to understand the significance of Lucian and his satire within *his* own political climate. "It is up to us [comedians] to overturn and shake and deconstruct and weigh every system that governs life,"<sup>408</sup> a responsibility that rings true for Lucian and his critique against the philosopher-sophists of the Second Sophistic.<sup>409</sup> Lucian's satires and their value to

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<sup>406</sup> C. Wren. "Late-Night TV Turns Political." *Commonweal* 145: 3 (2018): 27.

<sup>407</sup> C. Wren. "Late-Night TV Turns Political." 27.

<sup>408</sup> A. Nancherla, "Comedians in the Age of Trump: Forget Your Stupid Toupee Jokes." *The Village Voice*, 13 Dec. 2016 (<https://www.villagevoice.com/2016/12/13/comedians-in-the-age-of-trump-forget-your-stupid-toupee-jokes/>).

<sup>409</sup> Belenger's recent dissertation, *Speaking Truth to Power: Stand-up Comedians as Sophists, Jesters, Public Intellectuals and Activists* discusses the comparison between contemporary comedians and rhetoricians of antiquity. While her work deals primarily with the 'sophists' of the 'First Sophistic,' it is nevertheless clear that the tools of sophistry are engrained in the socio-political commentary that defines contemporary comedians (J. Belanger, 'Speaking Truth to Power: Stand-Up Comedians as Sophists, Jesters, Public Intellectuals and Activists' (2017). *Open Access Dissertations*. Paper 610. [https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/oa\\_diss/610](https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/oa_diss/610)).



society, although temporally far removed from modern comedians and the Trump presidency, have much in common with the overall goal of comedy, that is, to hold the objects of satire accountable for their actions and beliefs on the public stage. Although Lucian did not have the medium of television and social media, his ability to effectively communicate his satire stems from the hybrid nature of his works, and his capacity to speak to both elite, and non-elite audiences. Lucian holds a lens to society, and does so in such a manner that encourages reflection upon the hybridity of the period of the Second Sophistic, and those who inhabit it.

This dissertation has proposed that Lucian uses the theme of hybridity in order to critique contemporary philosophical ideals and practices, framing the philosopher-sophists of the period as hybrids through their unsuccessful melding of the virtues of philosophy with the power of rhetoric. The theme of hybridity has been explored in multiple ways, and this dissertation recognises Lucian's own hybridity, both in terms of his ethnicity and of his use of the serio-comic genre. Lucian, in a number of his works, underscores what a true hybrid and a false hybrid is, and the motif of the centaur serves to illustrate his point well, being simultaneously an admired figure through the mythical tradition surrounding Cheiron, while also being a source of violence and uncivilised behaviour, as evident in tales of the Centauromachy. I have argued that Lucian, rather than dismissing his hybridity, acknowledges (*Bis. Acc.* 33) and utilises it to create a more informed critique of the philosopher-sophists, establishing a series of works that serve to address both elite and non-elite concerns simultaneously.

This dissertation has comprised of five chapters, each outlining the means by which Lucian uses the motif of hybridity to achieve his critique of contemporary philosophers. The first chapter outlined the relationship of Lucian's works to the Aesopic tradition, as the relationship reveals how many of the tensions of high and low culture are present throughout the fable, and within the tradition surrounding Aesop himself. By addressing the reception of the Aesopic fable from the Archaic period up to Lucian's own time, it was shown how Lucian utilises the features of the Aesopic tradition to formulate his critique. The chapter also addressed the *Life* of Aesop, as it offers a clear image of Aesop's philosophical pretence from the position of a slave.

The second chapter of this dissertation expanded upon the role of the centaur in Lucian's works, and discussed the role of hybridity in the context of the mythical creature. This chapter first outlined the means of defining the philosopher-sophist as

derived from Plato, and then turned to the use of such a definition in Lucian himself. By outlining the Lucianic perception of the philosopher-sophist as being driven by greed, the chapter then assessed the way in which the imagery of the centaur was utilised to denigrate the philosopher-sophist, aligning the uncivilised and uneducated nature of the centaur with these false philosophers. Crucially in this chapter, it was shown how hybridity can serve a number of purposes, with Lucian likening his own hybridity to the ideal depiction of the centaur, seamlessly joined, and superior to both of its two halves.

Chapter Three addressed notions of hybrid wisdom. This chapter first outlined the significance of speech to perceptions of wisdom, and the way in which animal speech (or lack thereof) serves to be a useful tool for authors of antiquity to deny animals reason. With this idea in mind, the chapter then turned to Lucian's *Gallus*, and I have argued that this dialogue offers an example of hybrid wisdom. The rooster, being given the capacity for speech, is able to teach his interlocutor how truly to value his existence, and I argue that this instance of hybrid wisdom stands in direct opposition to the ignorance and flawed hybridity of the philosopher sophists.

A further type of hybridisation, that is, the way in which Lucianic characters are shown to breach their traditional boundaries, was the focus of Chapter Four. This chapter focussed upon the motif of viewing from above, and proposed that Lucian's positioning of his characters as looking down from above served to underscore the effect that the philosopher-sophists' hybrid corruption has had upon the populace. In viewing from above, Lucian's characters see human beings as merely driven by greed and their own reputation, which aligns with his own assessment of the pseudo-philosophers. I have argued that the hybrid philosopher-sophists, through their desire to appear wise, have sufficiently fooled humanity, and thrive not on attaining wisdom, but attaining followers for their given school.

The fifth and final chapter in this dissertation expanded upon the themes discussed in the previous one, but instead focussed upon the divine sphere. This chapter first outlined the role of hybrid deities more broadly, before assessing the presence of these deities in Lucian's works. I then argued that the presence of hybrid deities becomes less a critique of their hybridity as such and more of a critique of the effect of the philosopher-sophists' corruption. The gods show dissatisfaction with their dedication from below, and they propose that this absence of dedication is the result of humanity's dedication to the philosopher-sophists instead. Such an assertion was

exemplified through the study of Peregrinus, who represents the epitome of the corrupted philosopher-sophist. Driven purely by greed and reputation, Peregrinus stands at the core of corrupted hybridity, desiring followers over true wisdom.

Using the Aesopic framework, the theme of hybridity was explored through various examples of the human-animal hybrid. I explored physical hybridity through the centaur, discussed hybrid wisdom through modes of speech, and finally the capacity for hybridity to stretch across multiple spheres. I have argued that Lucian frames the philosopher-sophists as hybrids who, through their concerted effort to appear as a source of wisdom, have in fact failed to reach such heights, merely becoming a source of corrupted, *false* wisdom.

In my concluding remarks, I wish to move beyond the strict focus on Lucian and view his treatment of hybridity in the context of the Second Sophistic more broadly. It has been established that Lucian views the contemporary philosophers as corrupted hybrids, and uses the hybrid motif to explore and develop his satirical critique. As has been noted, Philostratus in his *Lives of the Sophists* makes the distinction between those who are true sophists, and those who are philosophers with the reputation of sophists. Among these is Dio Chrysostom, who, Philostratus states, declaims in the sophistic manner, but is nevertheless well versed in philosophy (*VS.* 7). Synesius too, portrays Dio as a sophist turned philosopher, noting the way in which his speeches are sophistic in style, but treat broadly philosophical themes (*Syn.* 1.59). In the context of Lucian's broader critique of the philosopher-sophists, it is worth considering how he may view someone such as Dio. Given Dio's description as a philosopher-sophist, it could be proposed that he is precisely the kind of individual whom Lucian intends to critique, however the way in which their works have similar goals and motivations<sup>410</sup> would arguably align the two in a category of hybridity of their own; sophists in their style, but philosophers ultimately in search of truth rather than reputation. Lucian, not unlike Dio, is himself a form of philosopher-sophist, yet perhaps it is precisely his position in such a role that gives him the capacity to critique from within. There exists a recognition by Lucian of his position both within and outside of the Second Sophistic, which allows him to engage with hybridity in a unique and unassuming manner. His omissions from

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<sup>410</sup> S. Swain, 'Dio and Lucian' in *Greek Fiction: The Greek Novel in Context*, edited by J.R. Morgan and R. Stoneman, (London: Routledge, 1994) 166-180.

the history books as a learned and influential figure is in and of itself an enlightening perspective from which to view his works. I propose that irrespective of his lack of ties to Herodes Atticus as a motivation for Philostratus' omission from his *VA*, Lucian's role in rocking the philosophical boat, especially given his similarities to Dio, belies a certain recognition of his simultaneous use and critique of the hybrid motif. The question of Lucian's relationship to the more celebrated sophists of the Second Sophistic is not one to be answered here, yet such an analysis in the context of Lucian's preoccupation with the motif of the hybrid could produce some illuminating studies to further understand Lucian's works, and their role in the Second Sophistic Period.

By framing the philosopher-sophist as a corrupted hybrid, Lucian's satires have an important role in attaining a more comprehensive understanding of the Second Sophistic period and those who lived during it. It has been shown that the motif of hybridity can, and has been, manipulated and moulded in a number of different ways, ultimately becoming a reflection upon the inherent hybridity of the period itself. In being a corrupted hybrid, the philosopher-sophists become harmful to the reputation of 'real' philosophers, to the extent that true philosophical wisdom has entirely gone by the wayside. Lucian, in his role as social satirist, serves to reveal the false nature of the philosopher-sophists, their 'braying' being shown up to be contrived utterances that survive under the appearance of wisdom. The Second Sophistic period is indeed a beautiful mess of contradictions, where good and bad are mixed together, and it is crucial for Lucian to engage with the spirit of this complicated period of literary history. In adopting the motif of hybridity to frame his critique, Lucian is able to disentangle the good from the bad, merge the elite and the non-elite, and engage with the truths behind the fictions, creating a successful hybrid in a world of corrupted centaur-like sophists.

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